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HORACE WALPOLE

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NOT ALL THE TRUTH: An Autobiography

HORACE WALPOLE.
After Reynolds. [*Frontispiece*

HORACE WALPOLE

(1717—1797)

A Biographical Study

by

LEWIS MELVILLE

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To
M. H. W. M.

PREFACE

I HAVE, wherever possible, let the subject of this biographical sketch state his views in his own words.

This I have been able to do thanks to the great generosity of Dr. Paget Toynbee, who has allowed me to make what use I please of "The Letters of Horace Walpole, fourth Earl of Orford, chronologically arranged, and edited with Notes and Indices by Mrs. Paget Toynbee," and of the three supplementary volumes edited by himself. This definitive edition was published in eighteen volumes, between 1903 and 1925, by The Clarendon Press, Oxford, which has courteously endorsed the permission granted to me by Dr. Paget Toynbee.

LEWIS MELVILLE.

LONDON, *March*, 1930.

INTRODUCTION

HORACE WALPOLE—"Horry" to the small circle of his intimates—is a splendid example of the man of inaction.

He never ran away to fight another day: he neither fought nor ran away.

He did not ride, or hunt, or shoot. Cards and dice had no attraction for him; and though, since he was a man of fashion, he belonged to the Clubs, he did not greatly frequent them.

The only "event" in his life occurred in his thirty-third year, when he was robbed, and nearly shot, by footpads in Hyde Park.

As became the son of a Prime Minister, he sat in Parliament for twenty-six years; but he was more interested in the *personnel* than the politics of Administrations. Men, not measures, may be said to have been his political motto. He was given, according to the custom of the day, a lucrative "place"; but he installed a deputy to do the work that arose in connection with it.

Early in his youth he fell in love with Lady Sophia Fermoy, but nothing came of this attachment; and, after this, women seemed to have attracted him not at all. He had a great liking for the elderly Countess of Suffolk; he accepted, somewhat shamefacedly, the devotion of the aged Madame du Deffand; and towards the end of his life he was fascinated by the youthful Misses Berry: it was

rumoured that at one time he thought of asking the elder sister, Mary, to marry him; but his fear of ridicule prevented him from making an offer to one who was his junior by half a century. He had some liking for the very beautiful and scandalous Lady Craven, the fascinating "Kitty" Clive, and, at one time, for the vivacious "Peg" Woffington; and a very strong distaste, arising partly from "family jars", for the eccentric Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, though towards her end he found some kind words to say of her.

He, as a matter of course, made the Grand Tour, during which he quarrelled with, and parted from, his companion, Thomas Gray, the poet—he had an unfortunate knack of quarrelling with friend after friend—and he paid one or two visits to Paris; but his happiest moments were those spent at his desk, or in an arm-chair in an inglenook. He had a house in Town; in his early years he was much at the family seat, Houghton, in Norfolk; but after he bought Strawberry Hill, in 1747, he hated to be away from it. It became the be-all and end-all of his life; and he concerned himself with little beyond the additions to the house, his collections of books, pictures, and curios, and perhaps more than anything, his private printing-press. When six years before his death he succeeded his nephew as (fourth) Earl of Orford, he was sincerely vexed, as it brought upon him duties and responsibilities that he would gladly have avoided. He was all his days on bad terms with the members of his family, other than his parents.

It is not, however, for Strawberry Hill and its collections that Walpole is remembered.

Walpole is unquestionably one of the outstanding

figures of the eighteenth century; because he did one thing superlatively well. He was the supreme letter-writer of his day. The quality of his correspondence is at least as great as its quantity—and that latter is immense. He began his epistolary career in 1741, and continued it to the very end of his days. It was the paramount interest of his life for fifty-six years. He allowed nothing to interfere with it; day in, day out, he added to its volume, and the amazing thing is that in these three thousand and more letters addressed to one hundred and fifty persons there is scarcely a dull page.

Walpole, who has several works to his credit, affected to despise—and probably actually did despise—"professional" writers: certainly he avoided their company so much as possible. "I do not look upon myself as an author," he said, and he declared that he thought nothing of his own books, not even of "The Castle of Otranto"; though he could scarcely conceal a sneaking affection for the "Historic Doubts".

Walpole affected to regard even his correspondence as an occupation for idle hours: yet he preserved clean copies of them—thereby earning Macaulay's just contempt for this pose. These letters are as valuable as they are unique, as an intimate chronicle of the times; of politicians; he had plenty to say of the troubles that ended in American Independence; of the gossip of the Court, the Clubs, and the Drawing-rooms; of literature, art, and the stage; of authors, artists; and actors and actresses. He was blessed with the gift of character-drawing, and had that nice spice of malice that makes the whole world kin.

As for wit, let him speak for himself: "I don't want money, consequently no old women pay me

for my wit; I have a very flimsy constitution, consequently the young women won't taste my wit; and it is a long while before wit makes its own way in the world; especially as I never prove it, by assuring people that I have it by me. Indeed, if I were disposed to brag, I could quote two or three half-pay officers, and an old aunt or two, who laugh prodigiously at everything I say; but till they are allowed judges, I will not brag of such authorities."

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HORACE WALPOLE

Chapter I

EARLY YEARS

THE family of Walpole claims an unbroken descent from one Reginald de Walpole, living in the time of William the Conqueror, whose son, Richard, married Emma, daughter and heiress of William de Havellow, Lord of Houton [Houghton], co. Norfolk. The Walpoles, without being especially distinguished, were yet, even in these early days, sufficiently prominent and wealthy. One Sir Henry was taken prisoner in the days of King John for adhering to the Barons, and in 1216 was fined £100. Another Sir Henry was summoned to Parliament in 1294; and his son, also Sir Henry, who survived until 1335, represented Norfolk in the Parliament of Edward II. Subsequent heads of the family were Henry (M.P. for Norfolk, 12 Henry VI); Henry (also living in the reign of Henry VI); John (alive in 1503); Thomas (died, 1512); Edward (born, 1484, died, 1559; married Lucy, daughter of Sir Terry Robsart, and heiress, at the death of her brother, Sir John and his daughter, Amy, wife of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, of her great-father, Sir John Robsart, K.G.). Edward's son, John, inherited the Robsart estates, and died 1588.

His eldest son having predeceased him, he was succeeded by his second son, Calibut (died 1646). Then came Calibut's eldest son, Robert (1593-1663); Edward (1621-1668), M.P. for King's Lynn after the Restoration, created K.B. at the Coronation of Charles II; and Robert (1650-1700), the eldest of Edward's thirteen children, M.P. for the family seat of Castle Rising, co. Norfolk. He married Mary, only daughter and heiress of Sir Geoffrey Burwell, of Rougham, co. Suffolk, by whom he had nineteen children.

Robert Walpole, the statesman, born in 1675, was the fifth child and third son—in 1690, his two elder brothers being dead, he became heir to the family estate, to which he succeeded in November, 1700.

A few months earlier, on July 30th, he had married, at Knightsbridge Chapel, Catherine, a daughter of John Shorter, of Bybrook, co. Kent, a Baltic timber merchant, and a son of Sir John Shorter, who in 1688 was arbitrarily appointed Lord Mayor of London by the special favour of James II. There seems to have been some haste or secrecy about the marriage, for the bridegroom's brother, Horatio, only heard of it the day before. It has been said that Miss Shorter had a dowry of £20,000, but she was "an extravagant woman of fashion," and her youngest son, Horace, says that the money was "spent on the wedding and the christening . . . including her jewels."

Of this union there were six children :—

(i) Robert, second Earl of Orford (died 1751), and father of George, third Earl of Orford (died unmarried, 1791).

(ii) Edward, who held successively the offices of Secretary to the Treasury and Secretary to the Duke

of Devonshire as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland (He was born in 1706, and died unmarried, 1784). He left, by Miriam Clements, three illegitimate daughters : Laura, who married Frederick Keppel, Bishop of Exeter and Dean of Westminster ; Maria, who married, firstly, James, second Earl of Waldegrave, and, secondly, William Henry, Duke of Gloucester ; and Charlotte, who became the wife of Lionel Tollemache, fourth Earl of Dysart.

(iii) Katherine, who died young.

(iv) Mary, who married in 1723, George Viscount Malpas, who later succeeded his father as (third) Earl of Cholmondeley. She died in 1731.

(v) Horatio, the subject of this memoir.

Horace Walpole was born in Arlington Street, St. James's, London, on September 24th, 1717 (O.S.). His godfathers were Charles Fitzroy, second Duke of Grafton ; his uncle, Horatio Walpole (afterwards created Lord Walpole of Wolverton), and his aunt Dorothy, Viscountess Townshend.

The child was christened Horatio ; but, he said later : "The name of Horatio I dislike. It is theatrical and not English. I have, ever since I was a youth, written and subscribed Horace, an English name for an Englishman. In all my books (and perhaps you will think of the *numerous Horations*), I so spell my name."

Horace Walpole was eleven years younger than any of his father's children, and it may have been this circumstance which made contemporary gossipers cast reflections on his paternity. Also, there is this to be said, that it was generally believed that for some time past Robert and his wife had not been on intimate terms ; and Lady Cowper, writing in 1720, says that, "Walpole let the Prince of Wales intrigue

with his wife, which both he and the Princess knew." It was not, however, the Prince who was suspected of being the father of Horace; but a Gentleman of his Royal Highness's Bedchamber, Carr, Lord Hervey, son of John, first Earl of Bristol, and brother of the better-known John, Lord Hervey of Ickworth, who married "sweet Molly Lepel." Circumstantial evidence is forthcoming, in that Horace differed much in appearance, character, habits, and mind from his elder brothers. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu divided all mankind into men, women, and Herveys: Walpole certainly came into the last category. Peter Cunningham finds another reason for believing in the rumour: "Lord Hervey's Memoirs and Horace Walpole's Memoirs are most remarkably alike, yet Walpole never saw them"— but it would not be fair to lay too much stress on this coincidence. The scandalous story was revived by the publication of Lady Louisa Stuart's "Introductory Anecdotes" to Lord Wharncliffe's edition of the letters and works of her grandmother, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1837).

It is beyond question that Horace Walpole had never any knowledge of this suspicion concerning his parentage: there is not the slightest hint of it anywhere even in his most confidential correspondence, and he was as attached to Sir Robert Walpole as heartily and sincerely as to the mother he loved.

The boy spent his earliest years either at Chelsea, where his father had a house; or at Downing Street; or at Houghton, which in 1722 Sir Robert began to rebuild with the money he had made by successful speculation in the shares of the South Sea Company: it is said he sold out at nearly the top of the boom, realising 1,000 per cent on his investment. It was

this that enabled him to make his famous collection of pictures, which later were sold to Catherine II, who housed them in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.

With the idea of his being instructed in the rudiments of education, Horace, with his cousins, the four younger sons of George, third Viscount Townshend, went for some months in the summer of 1725 to Bexley, in Kent, in charge of Edward, a younger son of Stephen Weston, who, by the influence of Sir Robert, had in the previous year been translated to the see of Exeter. The same programme was followed the next summer; but the place chosen was Twickenham, Middlesex, which village some score of years later was to become Horace's favourite home. In the winter, he studied every day under Weston at Lord Townshend's.

Horace Walpole, when he was seventy years of age, wrote of his health as a child. "I was extremely weak and delicate, as you see me still," he told the Misses Berry, "though with no constitutional complaint till I had the gout after forty, and as my two sisters were consumptive, and died of consumption, the necessary care of me (and I have overheard people saying, 'That child cannot possibly live') so engrossed the attention of my mother, that compassion and tenderness soon became extreme fondness." It was for this reason an agreed thing in the family that his wishes were never, if possible, to be thwarted. The boy expressed a desire to see the King so strongly that his fond parents determined to gratify it. It was unusual to ask for the honour of an audience for a child of ten; but, after all, that child was the son of the Prime Minister. The favour was granted; but so that it should not be made a precedent, it was settled to be at night, and in private. Accordingly on the night before George I set out on his last journey

to Hanover, on June 1st, 1727, Lady Walpole took her son to the apartments of the Countess of Walsingham, the niece of the Duchess of Kendal. When the King came down to supper, Lady Walsingham took Horace alone into the Duchess's ante-room, when he knelt, and kissed the Majesty's hand. The King said a few words, and the lad was led back to his mother. "The person of the King is as perfect in my memory as if I saw him but yesterday," so runs a passage in the "Reminiscences." "It was that of an elderly man, rather pale, and exactly like his pictures and coins ; not tall ; of an aspect rather good than august ; with a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat, and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of the same colour, and a blue riband over all. So entirely was he my object, that I do not believe that I once looked at the Duchess ; but, as I could not avoid seeing her on entering the room, I remember that just beyond his Majesty stood a very tall, lean, ill-favoured old lady ; but I did not retain the least idea of her features, nor know what the colour of her dress was."

In "Walpoliana," there is a slightly different version of the interview : "I do remember something of George I. My father took me to St. James's while I was a very little boy. After waiting some time in an ante-room, a gentleman came in, all dressed in brown, even his stockings ; and with a ribbon and star. He took me up in his arms, kissed me, and chatted some time."

Walpole, though he had no great enthusiasm for royal personages, as he was more than once at pains to mention, yet gave currency to a pleasant story about the King : "On a journey to Hanover the coach of George I breaking down, he was obliged to take shelter in the next country-house which

GEORGE I, WITH THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

belonged to a gentleman attached to the abdicated family. The King was of course shown into the best room, where, in the most honourable place, appeared —the portrait of the Pretender. The possessor, in great confusion, was about to apologize by pleading obligations, etc., when the King stopped him by saying, with a smile of indifference, 'Upon my word, it is very like the family'."

Walpole went to Eton on April 26th, 1727. The Headmaster was Dr. Henry Bland, afterwards Provost of Eton and Dean of Durham; Dr. Bland's eldest son, Henry, was his tutor. He did not greatly distinguish himself at the College, though perhaps his abilities were not so poor as he described them. "I don't know what made my last letter so long on the road: yours got hither so soon as it could," he wrote on June 29th, 1744, to Henry Seymour Conway. "I don't attribute it to any examination at the post-office. God forbid I should suspect any branch of the present Administration of attempting to know any one kind of thing! I remember when I was at Eton and Mr. Bland had set me any extraordinary task, I used sometimes to pique myself upon not getting it, because it was not immediately my school business. What! learn more than I am absolutely forced to learn! I felt the weight of learning that, for I was a blockhead, and pushed above my parts."

Among Walpole's schoolfellows were Charles Pratt, afterwards Lord Chancellor Camden; William Pitt; and John Stuart, third Earl of Bute—of which last he said later, "He was a man of taste and sense, and I do believe his intentions were good. He wished to blend and unite all parties." Better known to him were his cousins, the Hon. Francis Seymour Conway, afterwards first Marquis of Hertford; and

the Hon. Henry Seymour, afterwards Field-Marshal, Conway; Charles Hanbury Williams; George Augustus Selwyn, the wit and letter-writer; and William Cole, the antiquary. Among his closest friends were George and Charles Montagu, sons of General Edward Montagu, who, with Walpole, were known as the Triumvirate. With another group he was also intimately associated—it was nicknamed the Quadruple Alliance: it consisted of Thomas Gray, the poet; Richard West; and Thomas Ashton. Walpole's association with these lads had a very considerable effect upon his character, and elevated his thoughts to literature and art.

His father intended Horace for the law; and so, while still at Eton, he was entered at Lincoln's Inn on May 27th, 1731; but he says, "I never went there, not caring for the profession." He was, indeed, in the happy position of not having to worry about his future. Apart from what his father could allow him during his lifetime, and what he would bequeath to him, Horace, as a son of the Prime Minister could, according to the custom of that day, depend upon being presented to a sinecure office or two. In 1737 he was given the place of Inspector of Imports and Exports in the Custom House, which, in the January of the following year, on the death of Colonel William Townshend, he resigned on being appointed Usher of the Receipts of the Exchequer. There his Deputy was, first, one Swinburn, and after Swinburn's death, Grosvenor Bedford. The official residence was in New Palace Yard, Westminster. When he came of age he took possession of two other "little patent places" in the Exchequer, which had been held for him by Mr. Fane—Clerk of the Foreign Estreats and Comptroller of the Great Roll. The

post of Usher of the Receipts of the Exchequer was worth £900 a year, the other two together £300 a year. "From that time," Horace says, "I lived on my own income, and travelled at my own expense, nor did I during my father's life receive from him but £250 at different times; which I say, not in derogation of his extreme tenderness and kindness to me, but to show that I was content with what he had given to me, and that from the age of twenty I was no charge to my family." It is really difficult to conceive of anything more naïve than the last sentence.

Horace left Eton on May 27th, 1734, and on March of the following year went to King's College, Cambridge, where his father had been before him. Of his academic career, there is little to record. His own account is concise: "My public tutor was Mr. John Smith; my private, Mr. Anstey; afterwards Mr. John Whaley was my tutor. I went to lectures in civil law to Dr. Dickens, of Trinity Hall; to mathematical lectures, to blind Professor Saunderson, for a short time; afterwards Mr. Trevigar read lectures to me in mathematics and philosophy. I heard Dr. Battie's anatomical lectures. I had learned French at Eton. I learnt Italian at Cambridge, of Signor Piazzi. At home, I learned to dance and fence; and to draw of Bernard Lens, master to the Duke [of Cumberland] and the Princesses [Mary and Louisa]." Lens had earlier drawn an admirable portrait of Walpole as a school-boy. For mathematics Walpole had no flair. "I was always so incapable of mathematics, that I could not even get by heart the multiplication table, as blind Professor Saunderson told me above three score years ago, when I went to his lectures at Cambridge," he

admitted to a friend. "I was exceedingly mortified, and cried, for, being a Prime Minister's son, I had firmly believed all the flattery with which I had been assured that my parts were capable of anything. I paid a private instructor for a year; but at the year's end was forced to own Saunderson had been in the right."

Many years later, in 1759, he referred to this in a letter to Sir Horace Mann: "That ever you should pitch upon me for a mechanic or geometric commission! How my own ignorance has laughed at me since I read your letter! I say, your letter, for as Dr. Perelli's, I know no more of a Latin term in mathematics than Mrs. Goldsworthy had an idea of verbs. I will tell you an early anecdote in my own life, and you shall judge. When I first went to Cambridge, I was to learn mathematics of the famous blind Professor Saunderson. 'Young man, it is cheating you to take your money: believe me you never can learn these things; you have no capacity for them.' I can smile now, but I cried then with mortification. The next step, in order to comfort myself, was not to believe him; I could not conceive that I had no talents for anything in the world. I took, at my own expense, a private instructor, who came to me once a day for a year. Nay, I took infinite pains, but had so little capacity, and so little attention (as I have always had to anything that did not immediately strike my inclinations), that after mastering any proposition, when the man came the next day, it was as new to me as if I had never heard of it; in short, even to common figures, I am the dullest dunce alive. I have often said it of myself, and it is true, that nothing that had not a proper name of a man or a woman to it, affixes any idea upon my

mind. I could remember who was King Ethelbald's great-aunt, and not be sure whether she lived in the year 500 or 1500. I don't know whether I ever told you that, when you sent me the seven gallons of drams, and they were carried to Mr. Fox by mistake for Florence wine, I pressed him to keep as much as he liked, for, said I, I have seen the bill of lading, and there is a vast quantity. He asked how much? I answered seventy gallons; so little idea I have of quantity. I will tell you one more story of myself, and you will comprehend what sort of a head I have! Mrs. Leneve said to me one day, 'There is a vast waste of coals in your house; you should make the servants take off the fires at night.' I recollected this as I was going to bed, and, out of *economy*, put my fire out with a bottle of Bristol water!"

Walpole, though of mathematics he could acquire no knowledge, did obtain an acquaintance with the classics. He wrote a copy of Latin verses, published in the "Gratulatio Academiæ Cantabrigiensis" of 1736, addressed to Frederick, Prince of Wales, on the occasion of his marriage with Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha. His knowledge of Greek was far from thorough. When many years later, in 1785, it was suggested to him that he should print at the Strawberry Hill Press an edition of Anacreon, he told John Pinkerton that, apart from the question of expense: "My admiration of the Greeks was a little like that of the mob on other points, not from sound knowledge. I never was a good Greek scholar; have long forgotten what I knew of the language; and, as I never disguise my ignorance of any thing, it would look like affectation to print Greek authors. I could not bear to print them without owning that I do not understand them; and such a confession

would perhaps be as much ostentation as unfounded pretensions. I must, therefore, stick to my simplicity, and not go out of my line."

Young Walpole now, without being sickly, was yet not robust—which may have been one reason that, neither at school or at college, did he indulge in games. Indeed, he had no taste for any form of sport. He rode, but he did not hunt; he did not row, or play cricket; and it may safely be assumed that such amusements as cock-fighting and badger-baiting were abhorrent to him. Nor was he, so far as is known, in any way allured by the attraction of wine, woman, and song. He was happiest when in intimate converse with his friends; and he was fortunate that at Cambridge were a number of the old Eton set—among them the Conways, Cole, Gray, and Ashton (also at King's).

Lady Walpole died on August 20th, 1737, and Horace mourned her deeply: "While I write to you," Thomas Gray said to Richard West, "I hear the bad news of Lady Walpole's death, on Saturday night last. Forgive me, if the thought of what my poor Horace must feel on that account obliges me to have done." At a later period, Horace erected to his mother's memory a marble statue in Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster, with an inscription written by himself:

To the memory
of
CATHERINE, LADY WALPOLE,
eldest daughter of John Shorter, Esq.,
of Bybrook, in Kent,
and first wife of Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford,
HORACE,
her youngest son,
consecrates this monument.
She had beauty and wit,
without vice and vanity,
and cultivated the arts,
without affectation.
She was devout,
though without bigotry to any sect;
and was without prejudice to any part,
though she was the wife of a Minister,
whose power she esteemed
but when she could employ it
to benefit the miserable,
or to reward the meritorious.
She loved a private life,
though born to shine in public,
and was an ornament to Courts,
untainted by them.
She died August 20, 1737.

In March, 1738, Sir Robert Walpole married, privately, Miss Maria Skerret. Horace gives the name as Skerret, though others spell it Skerrett or Skerritt. The "irregular connection", as it has been politely called, between them had begun long ago, and there had been no concealment about the affair. In fact, Miss Skerret lived at his house at Richmond, and occasionally visited Houghton. It was no vulgar intrigue, but a very genuine love-affair. The lady, who was the daughter of Sir Thomas Skerret, a merchant residing in Dover Street, Piccadilly, until his death in 1734, was a wit and a beauty, with a

fortune of £30,000, and she moved in fashionable society.

It has frequently been stated that the marriage ceremony was performed privately; but that that was not the case is proved by the almost incredibly spiteful letter, dated March 19th, written by the Duchess of Marlborough to the Earl of Stair: "Sir Robert's wedding was celebrated as if he had been King of France, and the apartments furnished in the richest manner; crowds of people of the first quality being presented to the bride, who is the daughter of a clerk that sung Psalms in a church where Dr. Sacheverell was. After a struggle among the Court Ladies who should have the honour of presenting her, which the Duchess of Newcastle obtained, it was thought more proper to have her presented by one of her own family; otherwise it would look as she had no alliances, and, therefore, that ceremony was performed by Horace Walpole's wife, who was daughter to my tailor, Lumbar." Actually, Horatio, afterwards created Baron Walpole of Wolterton, married Mary Magdalen, daughter and co-heiress of Peter Lombard, of Burnham, co. Norfolk. What particularly angered the old Duchess was that the Duke of Dorset, Lord Stewart of the Household, with his white staff, waited on the bride to pay his congratulations with as much state as if she had been one of the royal family.

Among those who had always stood by Miss Skerret was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who kept up an active correspondence with her, and saw her frequently. "Miss Skerret," she wrote from Twickenham in 1735 to her sister, Lady Mar, "is in the house with me, and Lady Stafford has taken a lodging at Richmond: as their ages are different, and both

agreeable in their kind, I laugh with the one, or reason with the other, as I happen to be in a gay or serious humour; and I manage my friends with such a strong yet gentle hand, that they are both willing to do whatever I have a mind to." A little later, she wrote to the same correspondent: "I see but converse with nobody but *des amies choisies*. In the first rank of these are Lady Stafford and dear Molly Skerritt, both of whom have now the additional merit of being old acquaintances, and never having given me any reason to complain of either of them."

It may have been Lady Mary's support of "Molly" Skerret that made Horace Walpole, who was so devoted to his mother, so pursue her throughout her life with envenomed attacks.

It was to this liaison that Gay referred in *The Beggar's Opera*. Peachum might say,

> "And the statesman, because he's so great,
> Thinks his trade as honest as mine,"

and Sir Robert laughs at the jibe; but when the dramatist made Macheath (who was intended for the Prime Minister) sing,

> "How happy could I be with either,
> Were t'other dear Charmer away,"

then the great man, interpreting these lines, as did all the world, as a reference to Lady Walpole and Miss Skerret, became angry indeed. There can be little doubt that he, behind the scenes, had a hand in the refusal of the Lord Chamberlain to permit the presentation of the sequel to *The Beggar's Opera*, *Polly*, in which Walpole was again lampooned: the

sufficient reason being that it might lead to disturbances between those members of the two political parties who might attend the performances.

The second Lady Walpole died on June 4th, 1739, of a miscarriage, and the bereaved husband was heart-broken, declaring that she was "indispensable to his happiness." Of the union there had been two illegitimate daughters, one of whom predeceased her mother. For the other, Mary, Walpole, when on his retirement he was created Earl of Orford, secured a patent of precedence and rank as an earl's daughter—to the considerable indignation of many. Mary married Colonel Charles Churchill, an illegitimate son of General Charles Churchill by the actress Anne ("Nance") Oldfield. She later secured the post of Housekeeper at Windsor Castle, which she held until her death about the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Chapter II

THE GRAND TOUR

WALPOLE continued at Cambridge, though, as he mentions, with long intervals, till towards the end of 1738, but he did not leave it in form until the following year.

He set out in March, 1739, on the regulation Grand Tour, without which the education of an eighteenth-century English gentleman was not regarded as complete. Two years earlier he had declined an invitation from George Montagu and Lord Conway to go with them to Italy; but at that time he had little or no desire to go abroad. In fact, that he was never really fond of the Continent is proved by the fact that, while he might have travelled so much as he liked, since his circumstances were sufficient, and there was not a soul to say him nay, he lived practically all his life in England.

Walpole asked Thomas Gray to be his companion on the Grand Tour. Gray was then living unhappily at his father's house in Cornhill, in the City of London. He jumped at the offer. Walpole undertook to be responsible for all expenses; but Gray was otherwise to be independent. Further, Walpole made a will leaving, in the event of his death on the Tour, his possessions to his friend. The situation thus created was difficult, and was almost certain in due course to turn out adversely—as indeed it did.

The young men—Walpole was twenty-two and Gray a year older—went first to Paris, where they stayed for a couple of months. They then went with Henry Seymour Conway to Rheims, where they spent three months studying the language. They then passed on to Geneva, where Conway left them; and thence by Lyons to Turin; "So, as the song says, we are in fair Italy!" he wrote to Richard West on November 11th, 1739. "I wonder we are, for on the very highest precipice of Mount Cenis, the devil of discord, in the similitude of sour wine, had got amongst our Alpine savages, and set them a-fighting with Gray and me in the chairs: they rushed him by me on a crag, where there was scarce room for a cloven foot. The least slip had tumbled us into such a fog, and such an eternity, as we should never have found our way out of again. We were eight days in coming hither from Lyons; the four last in crossing the Alps. Such uncouth rocks, and such uncomely inhabitants! At the foot of Mount Cenis we were obliged to quit our chaise, which was taken all to pieces and loaded on mules, and we are carried in low arm-chairs on poles, swathed in beaver bonnets, beaver gloves, beaver stockings, muffs, and bear-skins. When we came to the top, behold the snows fallen! and such quantities, and conducted by such heavy clouds that hung glouting, that I thought we could never have waded through them. The descent is two leagues, but steep and rough as O——'s father's face, over which, you know, the devil walked with hobnails in his shoes. But the dexterity and nimbleness of the mountaineers are inconceivable: they run with you down steep and frozen precipices, where no man, as men are now, could possibly walk. We had twelve men and nine mules to carry us, our

servants and baggage, and were about five hours in this agreeable jaunt! The day before, I had a cruel accident, and so extraordinary an one, that it seems to touch upon the traveller. I had brought with me a little black spaniel of King Charles's breed, but the prettiest, fattest, dearest creature! I had let it out of the chaise for the air, and it was waddling along close to the head of the horses, on the top of the highest Alps, by the side of a wood of firs. There darted out a young wolf, seized poor dear Tory by the throat, and, before we could possibly prevent it, sprung up the side of the rock and carried him off. The postilion jumped off and struck at him with his whip, but in vain. I saw it and screamed, but in vain; for the road was so narrow, that the servants that were behind could not get by the chaise to shoot him. What is the extraordinary part is, that it was but two o'clock, and broad sunshine. It was shocking to see anything one loved run away with to so horrid a death."

Walpole and Gray passed on the Alps to Genoa; visited Palma, Piancenza, Modena, Bologna, and Florence, at which last place they arrived at Christmas-time.

At Florence there were many English folk coming and going; and here Walpole and Gray stayed, except for flying visits to Rome and Naples, for fifteen months, residing during the greater part of their stay with his distant relative, Horace Mann, at his villa on the Arno, Casa Antrosio, by the Ponte della Trinità. Walpole and Mann had been friends in England; and it was owing to this intimacy that the latter was in 1737 offered by Sir Robert Walpole the post of assistant to Charles Fane, the only son of Viscount Fane, the Envoy-Extraordinary and Minister

Plenipotentiary at the Court of Florence—"can this be the Mr. Fane" who held the two "little patent-places" for Horace Walpole until he came of age? Three years later, Fane retired, and Mann took his place. In 1755, he succeeded his elder brother in the estate at Linton, co. Kent, and in the same year was created a baronet, with reversion to his brother Galfridus. Mann's title to fame consists, apart from his adequate performance of his official duties, in little more than that it was to him that Walpole addressed so many hundreds of letters during forty-four years. Mann's letters, however, were described by Lord Dover as voluminous, but particularly devoid of interest, as they are written in a dry, heavy style, and consist almost entirely of trifling details of forgotten Florentine society, while Peter Cunningham dismisses them as "utterly unreadable". Thomas Seccombe, more charitable, says of them that, while they certainly lose much from a too anxious adaptation to Walpole's prejudices and affections, they are often diverting, and are valuable as illustrations of Florentine society. It must not be overlooked that this correspondence was avowedly written for ultimate publication, both parties making a point of the return of each other's dispatches. Mann's last letter to Walpole is dated September 5th, 1789, two months before his death. This passage of letters is the more extraordinary, in that after Walpole left Florence, the men never met again.

That Walpole had been charmed by Mann is obvious; but as the years rolled on, it is probable that he, to a considerable extent at least, regarded him as an addressee to which to send the letters that he could not refrain from writing. There is independent testimony to Mann in the "Travels of

THOMAS GRAY.
After Eccardt.

Alexander Drummond": "Mr. Mann is extremely polite, and I do him barely justice in saying he is a fine gentleman, though, indeed, this is as much as can be said of any person whatever: yet there are various ways of distinguishing the qualities that compose this amiable character, and of these he, in my opinion, possesses the most agreeable. He lives in a fine palace; all the apartments on the ground floor, which is elegantly furnished, were lighted up; and the garden was a little epitome of Vauxhall."

In the English colony at Florence there was some pleasant excitement in the summer of 1740, which is well and amusingly described by Walpole in his letters. "On Wednesday we expect a third she-meteor," he wrote to Richard West on July 31st. "Those learned luminaries the Ladies Pomfret and Walpole are to be joined by the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. You have not been witness to the rhapsody of mystic nonsense these two fair ones debate incessantly, and consequently cannot figure what must be the issue of the triple alliance: we have some idea of it. Only figure the coalition of prudery, debauchery, sentiment, history, Greek, Latin, French, Italian and metaphysics, all except the second understood by halves, by quarters, or not at all. You shall have the journals of this notable Academy." To Conway, he continued the story. "Did I tell you Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is here. She laughs at my Lady Pomfret, and is laughed at by the whole town. Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob, that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled, an old mazarine blue wrapper that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat. Her face swollen violently on one

side is partly covered with a plaister, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse, that you would not use it to wash a chimney."

Walpole could not leave the women alone. "But for the Academy, I am not of it; but frequently in company with it," he wrote to West in October. "Madame Pomfret, who, though a learned lady, has not lost her modesty and character, is extremely scandalised with the two other dames, especially with Moll Worthless [Lady Mary Wortley Montagu], who know no bounds. She is at rivalry with Lady W[alpole] for a certain Mr. ——, whom, perhaps you knew at Oxford. He fell into sentiments with my Lady W., and was happy to catch her at platonic love; but as she seldom stops there, the poor man will be frightened out of his senses when she shall break the matter to him, for he never dreamt that her purposes were so naught. Lady Mary is so far gone that, to get him from the mouth of her antagonist, she literally took him out to dance country dances at a formal ball, where there was no measure kept in laughing at her. . . . She played at Pharaoh two or three times at Princess Craon's, where she cheats horse and foot. She is really entertaining: I have been reading her works, which she lends out in manuscript; but they are too womanish: I like few of her performances."

Lady Mary was entirely ignorant of Walpole's acute feelings about her, of which naturally he showed no sign in social intercourse with her. "I saw him both at Florence and Genoa, and you may believe I know him," she told her daughter. "I was well acquainted with Mr. Walpole at Florence, and indeed he was particularly civil to me," she wrote on another

occasion. "I have great encouragement to ask favour of him, if I did not know that few people have so good memories to remember so many years backwards as have passed since I have seen him. If he has treated the character of Queen Elizabeth with disrespect [in "A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England"], all the women should tear him to pieces, for abusing the glory of their sex. Neither is it just to put her in the list of authors, having never published anything, though we have Mr. Camden's authority that she wrote many valuable pieces, chiefly Greek translations. I wish all monarchs would bestow their leisure hours on such studies: perhaps they would not be very useful to mankind; but it may be asserted, for a certain truth, their own minds could be more improved than by the amusements of Quadrille or Cavagnole."

Yet though he wrote so abusively about Lady Mary, he concerned himself with a new edition of the "Court Poems", though with what right has never transpired. "I have lately had Lady Mary Wortley's 'Ecloques' published; but they don't please, though so excessively good. I say so confidently for Mr. Chute agrees with me: he says, for the 'Epistle from Arthur Grey', scarce any woman could have written it, and no man; for a man who had had experience enough to paint such sentiments so well, would not have had warmth left. Do you know anything of Lady Mary? Her adventurous son [Edward Wortley Montagu] is come in Parliament, but has not opened."

Years later—to be precise, in August, 1751—he asked Horace Mann: "Pray tell me, if you know anything of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: we have an obscure history here of her being in durance in

the Brescian or the Bergamasco: that a young fellow that she set out with keeping has taken into his head to keep her close prisoner, not permitting her to write or receive any letters but which he sees: he seems determined, if her husband should die, not to lose her, as the Count Richcourt did Lady Orford." At the time of this incident, Lady Mary was in her sixty-second year. It is possible, she being what she was, that she should have taken a young man into keeping; but anyhow Walpole could always be trusted to make the best of a rumour.

Lady Mary's husband died in January, 1761, and she decided to return to England, which, considering her eccentricities, may well have alarmed her daughter, who had married John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, who at this time was Prime Minister. "I went last night to visit her," Walpole wrote to Mann on January 29th, 1762. "I give you my honour, and you who know her would credit me without it, the following is a faithful description. I found her in a miserable little chamber of a ready-furnished house, with two tallow candles, and a bureau covered with pots and pans. On her head, in full of all accounts, she had an old black-laced hood, wrapped entirely round, so as to conceal all hair or want of hair. No handkerchief, but up to her chin a kind of horseman's riding-coat, calling itself *pet-en-l'air*, made of a dark green (green I think it had been) brocade, with coloured and silver flowers, and lined with furs; boddice laced, a foul dimity petticoat sprig'd, velvet muffeteens on her arms, grey stockings and slippers. Her face less changed in twenty years than I could have imagined, I told her so, and she was not so tolerable twenty years ago that she needed to have taken it for flattery; but she did, and literally gave

me a box on the ear. She is very lively, all her senses perfect, her languages as imperfect as ever, her avarice greater. She entertained me at first with nothing but the dearness of provisions at Helvoet. With nothing but an Italian, a French, and a Prussian, all men-servants, and something she calls an *old* secretary, but whose age till he appears will be doubtful; she received all the world who go to homage her as Queen-mother, and crams them into this kennel. The Duchess of Hamilton, who came in just after me, was so astonished and diverted, that she could not speak to her for laughing. She says that she left all her clothes at Venice. I really pity Lady Bute; what will the progress be of such a commencement?"

Walpole, if malicious, was just—according to his lights. Of Lady Mary at this period, he had the grace to say, "She is much more discreet than I expected, and meddles with nothing"; but he could not refrain from adding that "she is woefully tedious in her narrations." She was actually suffering from cancer, which fact, by great fortitude, she concealed from her family. She passed away on August 21st, 1762, in her seventy-fourth year, and it may have been the pricking of his conscience that made him administer a rebuke to Lady Craven: "I am sorry to hear, Madam, that by your account Lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate and faithful as modern travellers. The invaluable art of inoculation, which she brought from Constantinople, so dear to all admirers of beauty, and to which we owe, perhaps, the preservation of yours, stamp her as an universal benefactress; and as you rival her in poetic talents, I have rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrums than detect her for romancing."

Of Lady Pomfret, the wife of Thomas Fermoy, first Earl of Pomfret, who was at Florence in 1740, Walpole told Conway: "She, Pomfret, has a charming conversation once a week. She had taken a vast palace and a vast garden, which is vastly commode, especially to the cicisbes part of mankind, who have free indulgence to wander in pairs about the arbours. You know her daughters: Lady Sophia is still, nay she must be, the beauty she was; Lady Charlotte is much improved, and is the cleverest girl in the world; speaks the purest Tuscan, like any Florentine." Walpole fell in love with Lady Sophia. He paid his court to her; but her mother supported the suit of Henry Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, who was indubitably a much more eligible *parti*. What Lady Pomfret did not know was that, before starting on his foreign tour, the young Earl had been to Esher, the seat of his uncle, Henry Pelham, to comply with a family arrangement of which the wealth of the Pelhams, united to the title of Newcastle, should vest in his person: he left Esher engaged to his cousin, the heiress, Catherine Pelham. When news of Lord Lincoln's infatuation for Lady Sophia Fermoy reached the ears of the Duke of Newcastle, he peremptorily ordered his nephew to return to England without delay—which command Lord Lincoln could not but obey. The story is told with the most amazing embellishments by M. F. Mahony (Matthew Stradling) in "A Chronicle of the Fermoys: Horace Walpole in Love".

Ultimately, in April, 1744, Lady Sophia became the second wife of John, Lord Carteret (afterwards first Earl Granville). In October of the next year, she died, in her twenty-fifth year, a few weeks after the birth of her daughter, Sophia, who became the wife

of William Petty, second Earl of Shelburne, afterwards first Marquis of Lansdowne, who in 1782, on the death of Lord Rockingham, became Prime Minister of England.

This was Walpole's first and last love-affair.

"As by the absence of the Great Duke, Florence is become in a manner a country town, you may imagine that we are not without *démêlés*; but for a country town I believe there never were a set of people so peaceable and such strangers to scandal," Walpole wrote to his cousin, Henry Seymour Conway, from Florence on September 25th, 1740. "'Tis the family of love, where everybody is paired, and go as constantly together as paroquets. Here nobody hangs or drowns themselves; they are not ready to cut one another's throats about elections or parties; don't think that wit consists in saying bold truths, or humour in getting drunk. But I shall give you no more of their characters, because I am so unfortunate as to think that their encomium consists in being the reverse of the English, who in general are either mad, or enough to make other people so. After telling you so fairly my sentiments, you may believe, my dear Harry, that I had rather see you here than in England. 'Tis an evil wish for you, who should not be lost in so obscure place as this. I will not make you compliments, or else here is a charming opportunity for saying what I think of you. As I am convinced you love me, and as I am conscious you have one strong reason for it, I will own to you, that for my own peace you should wish me to remain here. I am so well within and without, that you would scarce know me: I am younger than ever, think of nothing but diverting myself, and live in a round of pleasures. We have

operas, concerts, and balls, mornings and evenings. I dare not tell you all one's idlenesses: you would look so grave and senatorial, at hearing that one rises at eleven in the morning, goes to the opera at nine at night, to supper at one, and to bed at three! But literally here the evenings and nights are so charming and so warm, one can't avoid 'em."

Walpole thoroughly enjoyed his stay at Florence, and often played with the idea of going there again. "You say so many kind things to me in your letter of November 7th, on my talking of a journey to Florence," he wrote to Mann on November 24th, 1747, "that I am sorry I mentioned it to you. I did it to show you that my silence is far from proceeding from any forgetfulness of you; and as I really think continually of such a journey, I name it now and then; though I don't find how to accomplish it. In short, my affairs are not so independent of everybody, but that they require my attending to them to make them go smoothly: and unless I could get them into another situation, it is not possible for me to leave them. Some part of my fortune is in my Lord O[rford]'s hands, and if I were out of the way of giving him trouble, he has not generosity enough to do anything that would be convenient to me. I will say no more on this subject, because it is not a pleasant one; nor would I have said this, but to convince you that I did not mention returning to Florence out of *gaieté de cœur*. I never was happy there; have a million of times repented returning to England, where I never was happy, nor expect to be."

Walpole was taken ill at Florence. "About three or four in the morning," Joseph Spence noted, "I

was surprised with a message, saying, that Mr. Walpole was very much worse, and desired to see me: I went and found him scarce able to speak. I soon learned from his servants that he had been all the while without a physician, and had doctored himself; so I immediately sent for the best aid the place would afford, and dispatched a messenger to the minister at Florence desiring him to send my friend, Dr. Cocchi. In about twenty-four hours I had the satisfaction to find Mr. Walpole better: we left him in a fair way to recovery, and we hope to see him next week at Venice. I had obtained leave of Lord Lincoln to stay behind some days if he had been worse. You see what luck one has sometimes in going out of one's way. If Lord Lincoln had not wandered to Reggio, Mr. Walpole (who is one of the best-natured and most sensible young gentlemen England affords) would have, in all probability, fallen a sacrifice to his disorder."

In May, 1741, Walpole and Gray left Florence. At Reggio a misunderstanding arose between them and they parted. The cause of the separation is somewhat obscure; but it may be put down to incompatibility of temperament. It may be that Gray had been bored by the long stay at Florence, which was solely for his companion's pleasure; it may be that his spirit was irked by his financial dependence upon Walpole. A story, preserved by Isaac Reed, is that Walpole suspected Gray of abusing him, and opened one of his letters to England—this is given here for what it is worth. "The quarrel between Gray and me arose from his being too serious a companion," Walpole told Pinkerton. "I had just broke loose from the restraints of the University, with as much money as I could spend,

and I was willing to indulge myself. Gray was for antiquities, etc., while I was for perpetual balls and plays. The fault was mine." At this time of day it is not necessary to probe into the matter. Let Pinkerton's view suffice. "In any other similar case, we should have said: 'Here is a man, travelling in the highest style, at the expense of another, whose splendour he shares; introduced by him to Courts and Princes; in short, so much elevated, that his head becomes giddy, so that he quarrels for some trifle with his liberal benefactor; and by the ill-temper of an hour, forfeits his favours for life, and ruins all his own reasonable expectations," he wrote. "There can, indeed, be no doubt that, had it not been for this idle indulgence of his own haughty temper, Mr. Gray would, immediately on his return, have received a pension or office from Sir Robert Walpole, and it is probable that some peevish expression of contempt of any such remuneration placed an insuperable bar betwixt him and his friend's intentions."

It is pleasant to be able to relate a reconciliation between Walpole and Gray, when the former rented a house at Windsor in 1746, at which time Gray had completed his "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College", although their intimate relations were never resumed. "I agree with you most absolutely in your opinion about Gray," Walpole wrote to George Montagu in 1748. "He is the worst company in the world—from a little melancholy turn, from living reclusively, and from a little too much dignity, he never converses easily—all his words are measured and chosen, and formed into sentences. His writings are admirable—he himself is not agreeable."

"You have sent me a long and very obliging letter, and yet I am extremely out of humour with you," he wrote to Gray on February 18th, 1768. "I saw *Poems*, by *Mr. Gray* advertised: I called directly at Dodsley's to know if this was to be more than a new edition? He was not at home himself, but his foreman told me he thought there were some new pieces, and notes to the whole. It was very unkind, not only to go out of town without mentioning them to me, without showing them to me, but not to say a word of them in this letter. Do you think I am indifferent, or not curious about what you write? I have ceased to ask you, because you have so long refused to show me anything. You could not suppose I thought that you never write. No; but I concluded you did not intend, at least yet, to publish what you had written. As you did intend it, I might have expected a month's preference. You will do me the justice to own that I had always rather have seen your writings than have shown you mine; which you know are the most hasty trifles in the world, and which, though I may be fond of the subject when fresh, I constantly forget in a very short time after they are published. This would sound like affectation to others, but will not to you. It would be affected, even to you, to say I am indifferent to fame. I certainly am not, but I am indifferent to almost anything I have done to acquire it. The greater part are mere compilations; and no wonder they are, as you say, incorrect, when they are so commonly written with people in the room as *Richard* and the *Noble Authors* were. But I doubt there is a more intrinsic fault in them; which is, that I cannot correct them. If I write tolerably, it must be at once; I can neither mend nor add.

The articles of Lord Capel and Lord Peterborough, in the second edition of *Noble Authors*, cost me more trouble than all the rest together: and you may perceive that the worst part of *Richard*, in point of ease and style, is what relates to the papers you gave me on Jane Shore, because it was tacked on so long afterwards, and when my impetus was chilled. If some time or other you will take the trouble of pointing out the inaccuracies of it, I shall be much obliged to you: at present I shall meddle no more with it. It has taken its fate: nor did I mean to complain. I found it was condemned indeed beforehand, which was what I alluded to. Since publication (as has happened to me before) the success has gone beyond my expectation."

Walpole was much distressed by Gray's death in 1771, and he wrote to the Rev. William Mason: "I judge of your shock and concern at Mr. Gray's death by my own. I saw him the day before I left England. He complained of the gout flying about him, and said he had been a month at Kensington for the air. I saw him changed and very low, yet I had not the least idea of any sudden misfortune. Three weeks after I read in the *Chronicle*, at Paris, that he was dead! I would not believe it—not alas! from reason; but I could not bear to believe it. I wrote to Mr. Cole to inquire—he has confirmed it, and I find it at my return but too true. I feel for you, Sir, and as I most heartily regret him, I would do anything to show my regard to his memory. If he has left anything for the Press, I flatter myself mine will be allowed to contribute to that office. I shall be very happy to bear all the expense. You, I am sure, Sir, will let his genius want no due honour; and it is not to interfere with anything you may

design to say of him, and which you will say better than anybody, that I send you the following lines; they are not worthy of him, nor do I repeat them to you, but as a proof of my sorrow and tribute to your friend, which is the only light in which they can please you: you will see that the lines suppose him buried among his real predecessors.

"Great shades of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, hear,
A genuine Bard from Genius claims a tear.
He, who in numbers, worthy of the Lyre,
Enshrin'd your names, now joins the mighty choir.
Amidst your radiant Urns his Urn enclose,
A spot more hallow'd than where Kings repose;
Aloft let Pomp her Edwards, Henrys keep;
Near Homer's dust should Pindar's ashes sleep.

"If I could have greater contempt for the age than I have, it would be on observing that one single paragraph is all that has been said on our friend; but when there are columns in every paper on Sir Francis Delaval, ought we not to be glad? Who would be the hero of these times?

"Is there any chance, Sir, of your coming southwards? I long to pass a melancholy hour with you. Who has possession of the plate from my picture of Mr. Gray? I have many scraps and letters of his that show how very early his genius was ripe, and will please you exceedingly. To collect the reliques of our friends is perhaps the sweetest employment of those moments which remain when we have lost them! It is a decent preparation for our own fate."

This Walpole followed by another letter to Mason: "I not only agree with your sentiments, but am flattered that they countenance my own practice.

In some cases I have sold my works, and sometimes have made the impressions at my own press pay themselves, as I am not rich enough to treat the public with all I print there; nor do I know why I should. Some editions have been given to charities, to the poor of Twickenham, etc. Mr. Spence's Life of Magliabecchi was bestowed on the reading tailor. I am neither ashamed of being an author, nor a bookseller. My mother's father was a timber-merchant, I have many reasons for thinking myself a worse man, and none for thinking myself better: consequently I shall never blush at doing anything he did. I print much better than I write, and love my trade, and hope I am not one of those *most undeserving of all objects*, printers and booksellers, whom I confess you lash with justice. In short, Sir, I have no notion of poor Mr. Gray's delicacy. I would not sell my talents as orators and senators do; but I would keep a shop, and sell any of my own works that would gain me a livelihood, whether books or shoes, rather than be tempted to sell myself. 'Tis an honest vocation to be a scavenger, but I would not be a Solicitor-General. Whatever method you fix upon for the publication of Mr. Gray's works, I dare answer I shall approve, and will, therefore, say no more on it till we meet. I will beg you, Sir, when you come to town to bring me what papers or letters he had preserved of mine, for the answer to Dr. Milles, it is not worth asking you to accept or to take the trouble of bringing me, and, therefore, you may fling it aside where you please.

"The epitaph is very unworthy of the subject. I had rather nobody should correct my works than take the pains myself. I thank you very sincerely for criticising it, but indeed I believe you would

with much less trouble write a new one than mend that. I abandon it cheerfully to the fire, for surely bad verses on a great poet are the worst of panegyrics. The sensation of the moment dictated the epitaph, but though I was concerned, I was not inspired. Your corrections of my play I remember with the greatest gratitude, because I confess I liked it well enough to wish it corrected, and for that friendly act, Sir, I am obliged to you. For writing, I am quitting all thoughts of it; and for several reasons —the best is, it is time to remember that I must quit the world. Mr. Gray was but a year older, and he had much more the appearance of a man to whom several years were promised. A contemporary's death is the Ucalegon of all sermons. In the next place, his death has taught me another truth. Authors are said to labour for posterity; for my part I find I did not write even for the rising generation. Experience tells me it was all for those of my own, or near my own, time. The friends I have lost were, I find, more than half the public to me. It is as difficult to write for young people, as to talk to them; I never, I perceive, meant anything about them in what I have written, and cannot commence an acquaintance with them in print.

"Mr. Gray was far from an agreeable confidant to self-love, yet I had always more satisfaction in communicating anything to him, though sure to be mortified, than in being flattered by people whose judgement I do not respect. We had besides known each other's ideas from almost infancy, and I was certain he would *understand* whatever I said, whether it was well- or ill-expressed."

Walpole for the rest of his life was worried by what might be said about this breach between himself

and Gray, as is clearly indicated by his letter, written in 1773, to Mason :

"I am conscious that, in the beginning of the differences between Gray and me, the fault was mine. I was too young, too fond of my own diversions ; nay, I do not doubt, too much intoxicated by indulgence, vanity, and the insolence of my situation, as a Prime Minister's son, not to have been inattentive and insensible to the feelings of one I thought below me ; of one, I blush to say it, that I knew was obliged to me ; of one whom presumption and folly perhaps made me deem not my superior *then* in parts, though I have since felt my infinite inferiority to him. I treated him insolently : he loved me, and I did not think he did. I reproached him with the difference between us, when he acted from conviction of knowing he was my superior. I often disregarded his wishes of seeing places, which I would not quit other amusements to visit, though I offered to send him to them without me. Forgive me, if I say that his temper was not conciliating; at the same time that I will confess to you that he acted a more friendly part, had I had the sense to take advantage of it—he freely told me of my faults. I declared I did not desire to hear them, nor would correct them. You will not wonder that, with the dignity of his spirit, and the obstinate carelessness of mine, the breach must have grown wider, till we became incompatible. After this confession, I fear you will think I fall far short of the justice I promised him, in the words which I would wish to have substituted to some of yours. If you think them inadequate to the state of the case, as I own they are, preserve this letter, and let some future Sir John Dalrymple produce it to load my memory ;

but I own I do not desire that any ambiguity should aid his invention to forge an account of me. If you have no objection, I would propose your narrative should run thus, and contain no more, till a proper time shall come for stating the truth, as I have related it to you. While I am living, it is not pleasant to read one's private quarrels discussed in magazines and newspapers.

"In Section Second

" 'But I must here add, in order to forewarn my readers of a disappointment, that this correspondence (viz., during his travels) is defective towards the end, and includes no description either of Venice or its territory, the last places which Mr. Gray visited. This defect was occasioned by an unfortunate disagreement between him and Mr. Walpole which, arising from the great difference of temper between the pensive, curious philosophy of the former, and the gay and youthful inconsideration of the latter, occasioned their separation at Reggio.'

"*Note to be added.* 'In justice to the memory of so respectable a friend, Mr. Walpole enjoins me to charge him with the chief blame in their quarrel, confessing that more attention, complaisance, and deference on his part to a warm friendship and to a very superior understanding and judgement might have prevented a rupture, which gave much uneasiness to both, and a lasting concern to the survivor, though in the year 1744 a reconciliation was effected between them by a lady, who wished well to them both.'

"This note I think will specify all that is necessary, and though humiliating to me, it is due to my friend, and a vindication I owe him. It is also all that seems necessary either in section the second or fourth. As to section third, it is far from accurate, and in one respect what I am sure you will have too much regard to me to mention, as it would hurt me in a very sensible part. You will I am sure sacrifice it to my entreaty, especially as it is to introduce nothing to the prejudice of Mr. Gray: nay, I think he would rather dislike the mention. I mean the place I might have obtained for him from my father. That I should have tried for such emolument for him, there is no doubt; at least have proposed it to him, though I am far from being clear he would have accepted it. I know that till he did accept the Professorship from the Duke of Grafton, it was my constant belief that he would scorn any place. My inclination to be serviceable to him was so intense that, when we went abroad together, I left a will behind in which I gave him all I then possessed in the world—it was indeed a very trifling all."

In June, 1757, Walpole erected a printing-press at his house at Strawberry Hill "And by what do you think we open?" he told Chute on July 12th. "I found Gray in town last week: he had brought his two Odes to be printed. I snatched them out of Dodsley's hands." On August 4th, he wrote to Mann: "I send you two copies (one for Dr. Cocchi) of a very honourable opening of my press —two amazing Odes of Mr. Gray; they are Greek, they are Pindaric, they are sublime! Consequently, I fear, a little obscure." On the twenty-fifth of the same month, he remarked to Montagu: "You are very particular, I can tell you, in liking Gray's Odes

—but you must remember that the age likes Akenside, and did like Thomson! Can the same people like both?" Later, in 1757, Walpole printed at his press David Garrick's lines, "To Mr. Gray, on his Odes".

After Gray had left Florence, Walpole in company with Lord Lincoln and Spence, he went to Venice, where they remained a month, returning by sea from Genoa, landing at Antibes, and by way of Toulon, Marseilles, and Aix, and through Languedoc to Montpellier, Toulouse, and Orleans, arrived at Paris. He then left the others, and landed at Dover on September 12th, 1741.

Walpole loved France all his life, or, at least, Paris. "I visit Paris often, and have considerably studied the French character," he told Pinkerton. "In individuals it is often excellent; but taken in general it disgusts by its petulance and vanity. The French have always been dissolute in their amours; and are thus led to assail the chastity of foreign women, the most unpardonable of all affronts to fathers, brothers, husbands, and lovers. This, and their petulant overbearing conduct, prevent their conquests from being lasting. Yes, I swear to you by the Sicilian vespers, they can never be of much duration."

The earliest letter written by Walpole that has been preserved is dated August 7th, 1732, and is addressed to Charles, third son of Sir Thomas Lyttelton, fourth baronet, of Hagley, Worcestershire, an old Etonian, whom Mrs. Paget Toynbee believes to have been one of the Eton triumvirate. With him, to George Montagu, and Richard West, and Thomas

Ashton, and Henry Seymour Conway, he corresponded both when at home and abroad; but on September 11th, 1741, he began the long series of letters to Mann, who henceforth was his principal correspondent. Where another would have kept a diary, Walpole put on paper his thoughts and his doings, and sent them to Florence.

HORACE WALPOLE.
After Rosalba.

Chapter III

DOWNING STREET AND HOUGHTON

ON his return to England from the Grand Tour, Walpole took up his residence of his father at No. 10 Downing Street. He led the life of a young man of rank and fashion: he went to the opera and the theatres; he dined out; he put in an appearance at balls. He put a good face on it, but he was almost inexpressibly bored. An evening with two or three choice friends was much more to his taste.

On February 9th of the following year, Sir Robert Walpole resigned, after twenty years of administration, and was created Earl of Orford, and granted a pension of £4,000 a year.

Horace Walpole was divided in his feelings. He regretted his father's defeat, but was pleased at the prospect of freedom. "Trust me," he wrote to Mann, "if we fall, all the grandeur, all the envied grandeur of our house, will not cost me a sigh; it has given me no pleasure while we have it, and will give me no pain when I part with it. My liberty, my ease, and my choice of friends and company, will sufficiently counter-balance the crowds of Downing Street. I am so sick of it all that, if we are victorious or not, I propose leaving England in the spring."

All kinds of bitter attacks had, year in, year out, been made upon Sir Robert for (alleged) peculation of public funds: perhaps the most monstrous

was that which appeared in the *Craftsman*, November 28th, 1730, in the form of an advertisement :

"Taken up, near Arlington Street, a small memorandum-book (supposed to be lost by a gentleman who is packing up his alls), consisting of several articles, particularly the following ones : 'Settled on my eldest son, upon his marriage, £7,000 per annum. *Item.* Expended on my house in N—, and in pictures, £150,000. *Item.* On plate and jewels, very proper for concealment in case of an im—t, £160,000. *Item.* In housekeeping for six years past, at a moderate computation, £150,000. *Item.* Remitted at several times, within these twelve months last passed, to the Bank of Amsterdam, Venice, Genoa, £400,000, with many other particulars too tedious here to relate.' If the gentleman who lost it will please apply to Cabel d'Anvers, of Gray's Inn, Esq., the said memorandum-book shall be restored gratis."

Things were done then that could not now be done. There were sinecures galore, and "jobs" was an every-day task. The Sovereign, when he knew of them, winked at them, himself wanting grants of money and "places" for his favourites : the early Hanoverian Kings were very much at the mercy of their Ministers. Take the list of employments and incomes from private sources obtained by Sir Robert Walpole :

1721. April 5th. Robert Walpole, junior, Clerk of the Pells, £2,000 per annum.

1721. Collector of the Port of London by Henry Hare and Robert Mann, during the lives of Robert Walpole, junior, and Edward Walpole. The reversion of this place was granted on June 28th, 1716, and came into possession on April 12th, 1721. It was held by deed of trust at the disposal of Sir Robert Walpole. £2,000 per annum.

1725. The same when Lord Walpole, Ranger of Richmond Park.

1727. November 17th. Edward Walpole, Clerk of the Pleas in the Court of Exchequer. £400 per annum.

Edward Walpole, Joint-Secretary to the Treasury.

1737. February. Horace Walpole, junior, Usher of the Receipts of the Exchequer. £2,000 per annum.

1737-1744. Edward Walpole, Secretary to the Duke of Devonshire as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

1738. November 1st. Horace Walpole, junior, Clerk (or Keeper) of the Foreign Estreats. 1738. November 9th. Horace Walpole, junior, Comptroller of the Great Roll. Together, £500 per annum.

1739. May 9th. Lord Walpole, Auditor of the Exchequer. £7,000 per annum.

1739. Edward Walpole, Clerk of the Pells, on the surrender of Lord Walpole. £2,000 per annum.

Whatever accusations might be brought against Sir Robert Walpole, no one could deny that he was a considerate father and brother.

On March 23rd, 1742, Lord Limerick moved, and Sir J. St. Aubin seconded, for a Secret Committee of the House of Commons to examine into the conduct of Sir Robert for the last ten years of his being Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury. Horace Walpole, who in May, 1741, had been returned as member for Callington, co. Cornwall, made a spirited speech in defence of his father, which speech was printed in the magazines, but, the young orator declared, the reports were entirely false and had not one paragraph of what he had said in them. He sent to Mann, for his edification, a copy of his speech, which he had previously written out:

"Mr. Speaker—I have always thought, that, incapacity and inexperience must prejudice the cause they undertake to defend; and it has been diffidence of myself, not distrust of the cause, that has hitherto made me so silent upon a point on which I ought to have appeared so zealous.

"While the attempts for this inquiry were made in general terms, I should have thought it presumption in me to stand up and defend measures in which so many abler men have been engaged, and which, consequently, they could so much better support; but when the attack grows more personal, it grows my duty to oppose it more particularly, lest I be suspected of an ingratitude which my heart disdains. But I think, Sir, I cannot be suspected of that, unless my not having abilities to defend my father can be construed into a desire not to defend him.

"My experience, Sir, is very small; I have never been conversant in business and politics, and have sat a very short time in this House—with so slight a fund, I must much mistrust my power to serve him—especially as, in the short time I have sat here, I have seen that not his own knowledge, innocence, and eloquence, have been able to protect him against a powerful and determined party. I have seen, since his retirement, that he has many great and noble friends, who have been able to protect him from farther violence. But, Sir, when no repulses can calm the clamour against him, no motives should sway his friends from openly undertaking his defence. When the King has conferred rewards on his services; when the Parliament has refused its assent to any inquiries of complaint against him; it is but maintaining the King's and our own honour, to reject this motion—for the repeating which, however, I

cannot think the authors to blame, as I suppose now they have turned him out, they are willing to inquire whether they had any reason to do so.

"I shall say no more, Sir, but leave the material part of this defence to the impartiality, candour, and credit of men who are in no ways dependent on him. He has already found that defence, Sir, and I hope he always will. It is to their authority I trust—and, to me, it is the strongest proof of innocence that, for twenty years together, no crime could be solemnly alleged against him; and since his dismission, he has seen a majority rise up to defend his character in that very House of Commons in which a majority overturned his power. As, therefore, Sir, I must think him innocent, I stand up to protect him from injustice—had he been accused, I should not have given the House this trouble: but I think, Sir, that the precedent of what was done upon this question a few days ago is sufficient reason, if I had no other, for me to give my negative now."

Walpole, however, was far from satisfied by his performance on this occasion, and until his retirement from the House of Commons he was, almost invariably, a silent member. His work in the House has been persistently minimised, that is to say, if attendance is work; and a large volume could be filled with his comments on parliamentary matters in which he was interested and accounts of parliamentary debates at which he was present. And this in spite of the fact that he wrote to George Montagu in 1746: "My books, my virtu, and my other follies and amusements take up so much of my time to leave me little leisure to think of other people's affairs; and of all affairs, those of the public are least my concern."

"His politics," so runs a passage in "Walpoliana", "were like his religion, moderate and rational, not enthusiastic. He at all times hated democracy, which he considered as a theory too refined for human nature; and subordination of ranks was with him the golden chain of Homer. Human life he viewed as a series of unavoidable errors and passions, founded on deceitful appearances, moral and physical. He did not choose to anatomise his mistress, nor to use truth as an instrument of torment and disorder. With him, there remained no doubt that the mass of mankind were, of absolute necessity, doomed to ignorance; and that the new mirrors of reason might dazzle the populace by a few flashing beams, but never could distribute a regular, continual light. He highly approved a saying of Gibbon to the Editor: 'Those tenets may make the people giddy, but cannot enlighten or invigorate them. You and I may venture on a single glass of liqueur; but what would be the consequence, if we opened hogsheads of it to the people in the street?'"

Years later, in a letter written in 1758, he gave the Rev. Henry Zouch reasons why he would not write the biography of the father he so much loved. "When I speak my opinion to you, Sir, about what I dare say you care as little as I do (for what is the merit of a mere man of letters?), it is but fit I should answer you so sincerely on a question about which you are so good as to interest yourself," he explains. "That my father's life is likely to be written, I have no grounds for believing. I mean, I know nobody that thinks of it. For myself, I certainly shall not, for many reasons, which you must have the patience to hear. A reason to me myself is, that I think too highly of him, and too meanly of myself, to presume

I am equal to the task. They who do not agree with me in the former part of my position, will undoubtedly allow the latter part. In the next place, the very truths that I should relate would be so much imputed to partiality, that he would lose of his due praise by the suspicion of my prejudice. In the next place, I was born too late in his life to be acquainted with him in the active part of it. Then I was at school, at the University, abroad, and returned not till the last moments of his Administration. What I know of him I could only learn from his own mouth in the last three years of his life; when, to my shame, I was so idle, and young, and thoughtless, that I by no means profited of his leisure as I might have done; and, indeed, I have too much impartiality in my nature to care, if I could, to give the world a history, collected solely from the person himself of whom I should write. With the utmost veneration for his truth, I can easily conceive that a man who had lived a life of party, and who had undergone such persecution from party, should have had greater bias than he himself could be sensible of. The last, and that a reason which must be admitted, if all the others are not—his papers are lost. Between the confusion of his affairs and the indifference of my elder brother to things of that sort, they were either lost, burnt, or what we rather think, were stolen by a favourite servant of my brother, who proved a great rogue, and was dismissed in my brother's life; and the papers were not discovered to be missing till after my brother's death. Thus, Sir, I should want vouchers for many things I could say of importance. I have another personal reason that discourages me from attempting this task, or any other, besides the great reluctance that I have

to being a voluminous author. Though I am by no means the learned man you are so good as to call me in compliment ; though, on the contrary, nothing can be more superficial than my knowledge, or more trifling than my reading—yet, I have so much strained my eyes, that it is often painful to me to read even a newspaper by daylight. In short, Sir, having led a very dissipated life, in all the hurry of the world of pleasure, I scarce ever read, but by candle-light after I have come home late at nights. As my eyes have never had the least inflammation or humour, I am assured I may still recover them by care and repose. I own I prefer my eyes to anything I could write. However, after all I have said, perhaps I may now and then, by degrees, throw together some short anecdotes of my father's private life and particular story, and leave his public history to more proper and more able hands, if such will undertake it."

Walpole, though an undistinguished member of Parliament, could yet, when occasion arose, very definitely hold his own—especially when his father's reputation was in question. That, he was always prepared at any hazard to defend. When he thought it necessary to refute some derogatory statement, he would summon to his aid his pen rather than his voice. In 1747 was published a "Letter to the Tories", which Walpole believed to have been written by George Lyttelton, who with his family had joined forces with Henry Pelham. "As Mr. Lyttelton had been a great enemy of, and writer against, my father, and as Mr. Pelham had used my father and his friends extremely ill, and neglected the Whigs to court the Tories, I published an answer to that piece, and called it a 'Letter to the Whigs'," he wrote in "Short

Notes of My Life". "It was a careless performance, and written in five days. At the end of the year, I wrote two more 'Letters to the Whigs', but did not publish them till April the next year, when they went through three editions immediately. I had intended to suppress them, but some attacks being made by the Grenvilles on Lord Chief Justice Willes, an intimate friend of my father, particularly by obtaining an Act of Parliament to transfer the assizes from Ailesbury to Buckingham, I printed them and other pieces."

Walpole was now thoroughly roused, and, though as a rule placid enough, showed that he had a very pretty temper. "On the same occasion, I had a remarkable quarrel with the Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. Onslow," he continued. "The Bill was returned from the Lords with amendments. The friends of the Chief Justice resolved to oppose it again. Mr. Potter desired me to second him. He rose, but entering upon the merits of the Bill, Mr. Thomas Townshend and my uncle, Horace Walpole, (to prevent me) insisted that nothing could be spoken to but the amendments. The Speaker supporting this, I said: 'I had intended to second Mr. Potter, but should submit to his *oracular* decision, though I would not add to the complaisant peevishness of anybody else.' The Speaker was in a great rage, and complained to the House. I said: 'I begged his pardon, but had not thought that submitting to him was the way to offend him'."

Though Walpole did not take an active part in the deliberations of Parliament, he was in constant attendance at the House of Commons. "Don't think me guilty of forgetting you a moment, though I have missed two or three posts," he wrote on January

24th, 1743. "If you knew the incessant hurry and fatigue in which I live, and how few moments I have to myself, you would not suspect me. You know I am naturally indolent, and without application to any kind of business; yet it is impossible, in this country, to live in the world, and be in Parliament, and not find oneself every day more hooked into politics and company, especially inhabiting a house that is again become the centre of affairs." And again, on February 9th, 1764, to the same correspondent: "I have scarce time to write or to know what I write. I live in the House of Commons. We sat on Tuesday till ten at night, on a Welsh election; and shall probably stay as long to-day on the same." At the same time he did not neglect his several duties. "That you may not think I employ my time as idly as the great men I have been talking of, you must be informed that every night constantly I go to Ranelagh, which has totally beat Vauxhall," he wrote satirically to Henry Seymour Conway on June 29th, 1744. "Nobody goes anywhere else—everybody goes there. My Lord Chesterfield is so fond of it, that he says he has ordered all his letters to be directed thither. If you had never seen it, I would make you a most pompous description of it, and tell you how the floor is all of beaten princes—that you can't set your foot without treading on a Prince of Wales or Duke of Cumberland. The company is universal: there is from His Grace of Grafton down to children out of the Foundling Hospital—from my Lady Townshend to the kitten—from my Lord Sandys to your humble cousin."

"A house that is again become a centre of affairs" was No. 5, Arlington Street, off Piccadilly, which Lord Orford had taken when he left Downing Street.

This faced the house where Walpole was born, and he resided with his father, and, after the death of the latter, he remained its tenant until 1781, when the lease ran out. He was reasonably content here; but he disliked the great mansion, Houghton, which was one of the joys of Lord Orford. There he was far from happy, especially when the house was crowded with visitors.

In 1736, when he was at Cambridge, he wrote to Charles Lyttelton: "I am returned again to Cambridge, and can tell you what I never expected, that I like Norfolk. Not any of the ingredients, as hunting or country gentlemen, for I had nothing to do with them, but the county; which a little from Houghton is woody, and full of delightful prospects. I went to see Norwich and Yarmouth, both which I like exceedingly. I spent my time at Houghton for the first week almost alone; we have a charming garden all wilderness; much adapted to my romantic inclinations." Eight years later, however, he told Mann: "I am writing to you two or three days beforehand, by way of settling my affairs: not that I am going to be married or to die, but something as bad as either if it were to last as long. You will guess that it can only be going to Houghton; but I make as much an affair of that, as other people would make of going to Jamaica. Indeed I don't lay in a store of cake and band-boxes, and citron-water, and cards, and cold meat, as country-gentlewomen do after the Session. My packing-up and travelling concerns lie in a very small compass; nothing but myself and Patapan, my footman, a cloak-bag, and a couple of books. My old Tom is even reduced upon the article of my journey; he is at Bath, patching together some very bad remains

of a worn-out constitution. I always travel without company: for then I take my own hours and my own humours, which I don't think the most tractable to shut up in a coach with anybody else. You know St. Evremont's rule for conquering the passions was to indulge them; mine, for keeping my temper in order, is never to leave it too long with another person. I have found out that it will have its way, but I make it take its way by itself. It is such sort of reflection as this that makes me hate the country: it is impossible in one house, with one set of company, to be always enough upon one's guard to make one's self agreeable, which one ought to do, as one always expects it from others. If I had a house of my own in the country and could live there now and then alone, or frequently changing my company, I am persuaded I should like it; at least, I fancy I should; for when one begins to reflect why one don't like the country, I believe one grows near liking it. I feel very often that I grow to correct twenty things in myself, as thinking them ridiculous at my age; and then with my spirit of whim and folly, I make myself believe that this is all prudence, and that I wish I were young enough to be as thoughtless and extravagant as I used to be. But if I know anything of the matter, this is all flattering myself: I grow older, and love my follies less—if I did not, alas! poor prudence and reflection!"

Walpole found his one pleasure at Houghton in the wonderful gallery of pictures, brought together by years of judicious collecting: subsequently, for the sum of £40,000, it passed to Catherine of Russia, who housed it in the Hermitage Palace of St. Petersburg. One of Walpole's cleverest *jeux d'esprit*, the "Sermon on Painting", was prompted by the

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, FIRST EARL OF ORFORD.
After Kneller.

Houghton Gallery. He wrote it to amuse his father, before whom it was preached by the Earl's chaplain. He occupied much of his time about 1742-1743 in preparing, upon the model of the "Ædes Barverini" and "Giustinianæ", and "Ædes Walpolianæ", which, besides being something more than a mere catalogue, includes an excellent introduction.

Walpole had already plied his pen. In 1742 he had written "The Lessons for the Day: being the first and second chapters of the Book of Preferment". He did not intend to publish this; but his friend, Edward Coke, made a copy of it, and dispersed it until it got into print. It was, says the author, "the original of a great number of things of that sort". In June of the next year, he poured ridicule on the new Ministry in a "Parody on some scenes of Macbeth, called The Dear Witches", which appeared in a weekly paper, called *Old England, or, The Constitutional Journal.* This was followed by an attack on Lord Bath in No. 38 of the same publication. In the summer of 1744, he wrote a "Parody of a scene in Corneille's Cinna," the interlocution being Pelham, Arundel, and Selwyn.

The Earl of Orford died on March 28th, 1745. His youngest son was happy that the malignity of his political foes did not pursue him beyond the grave. "Lord Orford's enemies," he wrote to Mann a few weeks after the sad event, "pay him the compliment of saying, 'they do believe now that he did not plunder the public, as he was accused (as *they* accused him) of doing, he having died in such circumstances.' If he had no proofs of his honesty but this, I don't think this would be such indisputable authority: not leaving immense riches would be scanty evidence of his not having acquired them. It is certain he

is dead very poor: his debts, with his legacies, which are trifling, amount to fifty thousand pounds. His estate, a nominal eight thousand a year, much mortgaged. In short, his fondness for Houghton has endangered Houghton. If he had not so overdone it, he might have left such an estate to his family as might have secured the glory of the place for many years: another such debt must expose it to sale. If he had lived, his unbounded generosity and contempt of money would have run him into vast difficulties. However irreparable his personal loss may be to his friends, he certainly died critically well for himself; he had lived to stand the rudest trials with honour, to see his character universally cleared, his enemies brought to infamy for their ignorance or villainy, and the world allowing him to be the only man in England fit to be what he had been; and he died at a time when his age and infirmities prevented him again undertaking the support of a Government which engrossed his whole care, and which he foresaw was falling into confusion. In this hope his judgment failed! His fortune attended him to the last; for he died of the most painful disorders, with little or no pain."

The death of his father made a change in Walpole's financial position. In 1744, he had told Henry Seymour Conway that his income was then about £2,000 a year. His father left him the house in Arlington Street, £5,000 in money—of which, however, he never received more than £1,000. But this was not all. As has been said, Sir Robert had secured for his eldest son, Robert, the great place of Auditor of the Exchequer, and for his second son, Edward, that of Clerk of the Pells. George I had bestowed on Sir Robert the patent place of Collector of the Customs,

for his own life, and for the lives of his two elder sons; but the first holder had reserved to himself the right to dispose of the income of that place, as he should please, during the existence of the grant, and, under this power, he bequeathed to Horace Walpole, out of the patent, £1,000 a year, for the remainder of the term, and divided the balance, about £800 a year, between Edward and Horace.

This was awkward, because in the event of the death of his two elder brothers, Horace's income from this source would cease. His brother, Robert, was not in robust health, and the next in succession, Edward, was eleven years his senior. He was persuaded by friends to appeal to Henry Pelham to ask the King for his name to be added to the patent. Pelham said that he could not do this, but if Horace could induce Edward to let his name stand in lieu of the senior, the affair might be managed. Horace answered quickly: "Sir, I will never ask my brother to stand in a precarious light instead of me." Edward, it may be mentioned, survived until January 12th, 1784, so that there was no immediate distress.

Walpole on sinecure places is unconsciously amusing, when he defends the practice of such grants in his "Reminiscences"; but there is no doubt that he was expressing the views of its generation, or at least the views of that class which was likely to get something for nothing. "I presume boldly to say that my father had a legal right of making the provision for me he did in the places I hold. Patent-places for life have existed from time immemorial, by law, and under all changes of Government. He who holds an ancient patent-place enjoys it as much by law as any gentleman holds his estate, and by more ancient tenure than most gentlemen hold theirs,

and from the same fountain, only of ancienter date, than many of the nobility and gentry hold their estates, who possess them only by grants from the Crown, as I possess my places; which were not wrung from the Church, and in violation of the intention of the donors, as a vast number of estates were: nor can I think myself as a patent-place man a more useless or a less legal engrosser of part of the wealth of the nation than deans and prebendaries, who fatten on Christianity like any less holy incumbent of a fee. While there are distinctions of ranks, and unequal divisions of property, not acquired by personal merit, but by birth or favours, some will be more fortunate than others. The poor are most entitled to complain; but an archdeacon or a country gentleman has very little grace in complaining that any other unprofitable class is indulged by the laws in the enjoyment of more than an equal share of property with the meanest labourer or the lowest mechanic."

The argument is certainly specious. If Sir Robert Walpole's sons were given patent-places as part of the rewards due to him for his long service to the country the matter is at least arguable. Some other method of reward, however, is to-day regarded as preferable—such as grants of money to eminent sailors and soldiers. Certainly, no other excuse for the bestowal of sinecures is tolerable. If the place is one that involves work, then it should be given only to those capable of performing the duties. Walpole has given an account of what had to be done in the office of Usher of the Exchequer; but, as a matter of fact, the work was done by his Deputy. As regards the place of Collector of the Customs, he says nothing of its duties.

"No man who holds a place for life is dependent on the Crown, farther than his duty or his gratitude binds him," says Walpole; but it must be mentioned that this was not quite the line he took when his nephew, George, third Earl of Orford, accepted the post of Ranger of St. James's and Hyde Parks. As regards himself, he states with pride: "My conduct, while I sat in Parliament, is most probably forgotten; but no man can recollect that it looked like servility to Ministers." Again he writes: "I, perhaps, by nature of my office am more dependent than any patent-holder; and yet I may presume to say that, having suffered by that dependence, because I would not violate my principles and conscience, I cannot be deemed a servile placeman."

After this, it is amusing to read the following extract from a letter from him to George Montagu eleven years after the death of his father: "Thank you for your Exchequer—Ward writes for me, but I am apt to think that I have enough from thence already—don't think my horns and hoofs are growing when I profess indifference to my interest. Disinterestedness is no merit in me; it happens to be my passion."

Edmund Burke's agitation for economical reform fluttered many a dovecot, and no one was more troubled than Walpole, who in 1782 indited an "Account of my Conduct relative to the Places I hold under Government, and towards Ministers", although it was not published until the year after his death. "It is very difficult to state my case, and not seem to defend it," he writes pathetically. "But I am telling the truth, and not pleading for favour; at least, my object is to obtain a favourable opinion of my character. I am far more indifferent about my fortune. But surely any impartial man will reflect

how grievous it must be to a disinterested mind to be held up to the public as a blood-sucker, under the invidious name of a place-man; to be one of those pointed at by County Associations as grievances that call for speedy correction and removal; in short, to be confounded with contractors and other leaches, that have grown out of the profusions and abuses of the time; though my office has existed from the earliest times, and has existed under the best Government, public distress demands economy and correction. Be they exercised, I desire no exemption. But being guilty of no servile, of no indirect means in obtaining, augmenting, or retaining my office, I am ready to resign that office; but I will prove (and defy all mankind to detect me in a single falsehood) that I have held my place with honour, and have nothing to palliate or conceal in my execution of it. . . . What I hold, I hold by law; if the law deprives me, I have too much reverence for the laws of my country to complain. No man ever heard me utter a syllable on my own behalf. My nearest friends know that I have required them not to interpose to save me. This dread of seeming to make interest to save my place, preponderated with me to appear ungrateful for a time, but it should look like a selfish compliment. . . . This apology for my conduct will, I hope, be accepted from a man who has nothing to boast but his disinterestedness, and is grievously wounded by standing in the light of one by whom the public suffers. Were my place worth double £4,000, I could resign it cheerfully, at the demand of my country; but having never flattered the Ministers I disapproved, nor profited to the value of a shilling by my dearest friends when in power—which they have been twice of late years—(and having

so much reason to be proud of their friendship, why should I not name two such virtuous, upright men as the Duke of Richmond and General Conway?)—I cannot bear to appear in the predicament of one enriched to the detriment of the country. This stab has been given to my peace; and the loss of my place will find, not cause, the wound; nor will the retention of the place heal it. It is this most scrupulous state of facts that alone can rehabilitate me in the eyes of the public, if anything can; and though nothing would have drawn a vain detail from me, unprovoked, it cannot be thought arrogant to endeavour to wipe off reproach, nor impertinent to aim at negative merit with the public, instead of submitting to undeserved and invidious obloquy."

Chapter IV

FAMILY JARS

WALPOLE was, if not of a quarrelsome, of at least a "touchy" disposition. He had quarrelled with Thomas Gray; he was presently to quarrel with Thomas Ashton and the Rev. William Mason, with Richard Bentley, and Müntz. In the matter of his relations with his family, which were far from happy, he was, however, more sinned against than sinning. If the "Correspondence" is a safe guide, then most of the Walpoles were not pleasing people.

A great trouble to him was the wife of his eldest brother, Robert. She was Margaret, only daughter and heiress of Samuel Rolle, of Heanton Satchville, Devonshire, by his wife, Margaret Tuckfield. She married him in 1724, and had by him one child, George, who succeeded as (third) Earl of Orford, on the death of his father in 1751. Her mode of life was a scandal, even in the lax days of the reign of George II, and her husband left her. "There was a report here a fortnight ago, of the new Countess coming over," he wrote, in something like agony to Mann, on April 29th, 1745. "She could not then have heard it. Can she be so mad? Why should she suppose all her shame buried in my Lord's grave? or does not she know, has she seen so little of the world, as not to be sensible that she will now return in a worse light than ever? A few malicious, who

would have countenanced her to vex him, would now treat her like the rest of the world. It is a private family affair: a husband, a mother, and a son, all party against her, all wounded by her conduct, would be too much to get over!"

Walpole was really perturbed, for though he might be at loggerheads with his relations, he was a stickler for the dignity of his family, and Lady Orford outraged all his susceptibilities. Again and again, he returned to the subject. Within a couple of months, he was writing to Mann: "I have been a fortnight in the country, and had ordered all my letters to be kept till I came to town, or I should have written to you sooner about my sister-Countess. She is not arrived yet, but is certainly coming: she has dispatched several letters to notify her intentions: a short one to her mother, saying, 'Dear Madam, as you have often desired me to return to England, I am determined to set out, and hope you will give me reasons to subscribe myself your most affectionate daughter.' This 'often desired me to return' has never been repeated since the first year of her going away. The poor *Signora-madre* is in a terrible fright, and will not come to town till her daughter is gone again, which all advices agree will be soon. Another letter is to my Lady Townshend, telling her, 'that as she knows Her Ladyship's way of thinking, she does not fear the continuance of her friendship.' Another, a long one to my Lord Chesterfield; another to Lady Isabella Scott, an old friend of hers; and one to Lady Pomfret. This last says, that she hears from Uguccioni, my Lady O. will stay here very little time, having taken a house at Florence for three years. She is to come to my Lady Denbigh. My brother is extremely obliged to you for all your

notices about her, though he is very indifferent about her motions. If she happens to choose law (though on what foot no mortal can guess), he is prepared; having from the first hint of her journey, fee'd every one of the considerable lawyers. In short, this jaunt is as simple as all the rest of her actions have been *hardy*. Nobody wonders at her bringing no English servants with her—they know, and consequently might tell, too much."

To the great disgust and distress of Walpole, Lady Orford, true to her word, returned to England early in September; but only, she said, for a short visit, during which, she announced, it was her intention to endeavour to get a certain monetary allowance. From the following letter it is obvious that she was not received anywhere, except among her intimates, with open arms. "My Lady O. makes little progress in popularity," Walpole told Mann. "Neither the protection of my Lady Pomfret's prudery, nor of my Lady Townshend's libertinism, do her any service. The women stare at her, think her ugly, awkward, and disagreeable; and what is worse, the men think so, too. For the height of mortification, the King has declared publicly to the Ministry that he has been told of the great civilities which he was said to show her at Hanover; that he protests he showed her only the common civilities due to any English lady that comes thither; that he never intended to take any particular notice of her; nor had, nor would let my Lady Yarmouth. In fact, my Lady Yarmouth peremptorily refused to carry her to Court here; and when she did go with my Lady Pomfret, the King but just spoke to her. She declares her intention of staying in England, and protests against all lawsuits and violences; and says she only asks

articles of separation, and to have her allowance settled by any two arbitrators chosen by my brother and herself. I have met her twice at my Lady Townshend's, just as I used at Florence. She dresses English and plays at whisk. I forgot to tell you a *bon mot* [Isaac] of Leheup [brother-in-law of Horatio Walpole, the elder] on her first coming over, he was asked if he would not go and see her. He replied, 'No, I never visit modest women'."

The Countess of Orford did not hasten to return to the Continent. At least one reason was that she found a new lover. This was the Hon. Sewallis Shirley, a younger son of the first Earl Ferrars, and sometime Comptroller of the Household to Queen Charlotte. In spite of Walpole's unfavourable comments, Shirley must have had "a way" with him, for he was unquestionably attractive to women. He had been, rather earlier, a lover of Frances Anne, Viscountess Vane, who had been immortalised by the interpolation of her "Memoirs of a Lady of Quality" in "Peregrine Pickle". Of this man, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote to her daughter, the Countess of Bute: "Mr. Shirley has had uncommon fortune in making the conquest of two such extraordinary ladies, equal in their heroic contempt for shame, and eminent above their sex, the one for beauty, and the other for wealth, both which attract the pursuit of all mankind, and have been thrown into his arms with the same unlimited fondness. He appeared to me, gentle, well-bred, well-shaped, and sensible; but the charm of his face and eyes, which Lady Vane describes with so much warmth, were, I confess, always invisible to me, and the artificial part of his character very glaring, which I think her story shows in a strong light."

Lady Orford was, for a while at least, enchanted

with her new lover; but about Christmas, 1746, she, taking him with her in her train, went abroad, "not being able," Walpole said, "to live on fifteen hundred pounds a year—many an old lady, and uglier too, lives very comfortably upon less."

After the death of her first husband in 1751, the Countess married Shirley; but, as Walpole told Mann later, the union was not felicitous, and the happy couple soon separated. "However, as little novelty as the season or the times produce, there is an adventuress in the world, who even in the dullest times will take care not to let conversation stagnate: this public-spirited dame is no other than a Countess Dowager, my sister-in-law, who has just notified to the town her intention of parting from her second husband—a step which, being in general not likely to occasion much surprise, she had, however, taken care to render extraordinary, by a course of inseparable fondness and wonderful jealousy, for the three years since these her second nuptials," he wrote in July, 1754. "The testimonials which Mr. Shirley had received in print from that living academy of love-lore, my Lady Vane, added to this excessive tenderness of one, little less a novice, convinced everybody that he was a perfect hero—but as all heroes have some part or other in which they are mortal, the laughing world will not be persuaded, that there is any other cause of this separation than some material flaw in a texture hitherto so herculean. You will pity poor Hercules! Omphale, by a most unsentimental precaution, has so secured to her own disposal her whole estate and jointure, that he cannot command so much as a distaff; and she is not inclined to pay much for nothing, her offers on the article of separation are exceedingly moderate. As yet he has

not accepted them, but is gone to Scarborough, and she into the west, to settle her affairs, and from thence embarks for France and Italy. As she is very rich, will the Count have recourse to any restoratives? I am sorry she will plague you again at Florence; but I shall hear of what materials she composes her second volume, and what reasons she will allege in her new manifestoes; her mother, who sold her, is dead, the all-powerful Minister, who bought her, is dead! Whom will she charge with dragging her to the bed of this second tyrant, from whom she has been forced to fly? On her son's account, I am really sorry for this second *equipée:* I can't even help pitying her! at her age nobody can take such steps, without being sensible of their ridicule, and what snakes must passions be, as can hurry one over such reflections? Her original story was certainly very unhappy; and the forcing so very young a creature against her inclinations, unjustifiable: but I much question whether any choice of her own could have tied down her inclinations to any temper —at least, I am sure she had pitched upon a Hercules then, who of all men living was the least proper to encounter such labours, my Lord Chesterfield."

The Countess of Orford, in 1760, succeeded in her own right as Baroness Clinton and Saye, as descendant of Arabella, eldest daughter of Theophilus Clinton, fifth Earl of Lincoln and seventeenth Baron Clinton. She survived until 1781, when she died at Pisa, having toward the end of her life lived almost entirely with her *cisisteo*, Cavaliere Mozzi.

One trouble after another for poor Walpole!

"I have been unfortunate in my own family," he wrote on December 5th, 1746, to Mann. "My nephew, Captain Cholmondeley, has married a player's sister.

I fear Lord Malpas is on the brink of matrimony with another girl of no fortune. Here is a ruined family: their father totally undone, and all he has seized for debt." Lord Malpas, the eldest son of George, second Earl of Cholmondeley (who had married Mary, the only legitimate daughter of Sir Robert Walpole), married in January, 1747, Hester, daughter of Sir Francis Edwards, of Shrewsbury—if this was the lady of no fortune, there was at least no misalliance. His second brother, Robert, married in 1746, Mary, younger sister of Margaret ("Peg") Woffington, who left the Army, took holy orders, and became Rector of St. Andrew's, Hertford.

Probably nothing in Peg Woffington's career gave her more pleasure than, at her own benefit on April 30th, 1745, the appearance, "for the first time on any stage," of her younger sister Mary in the part of Cherry in *The Beaux Stratagem*. Peg, whatever her faults, looked after her family. She provided for her mother, and took Mary under her wing, and saw to it that she was properly educated. Mary was very pretty, and attracted many admirers. Whatever her morals, Peg was determined that no mischance should happen to her sister. However, Cholmondeley wanted to marry Mary, so all was well, except that the Earl was opposed to the alliance. Peg used all her fascination to charm his Lordship, and succeeded in inducing him to withdraw his opposition. When he yielded, he said to her that he had been "so very much offended previously" by the suggestion of the marriage. "Offended previously!" said the actress, who, having had her way, was evidently in the most hoity-toity mood, "I have the most cause to be offended now." "Why, dear lady?" she was asked. "Because," she retorted, "I had only

one beggar to support, and now I shall have two!" His Lordship's reply has not been recorded.

There were several children of the marriage: Mary Henrietta, who was Maid of Honour to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, who, when driving with her mistress through Leatherhead, in 1806, was killed by the overturning of the carriage; Jane Elizabeth; Hester Frances, who in 1783 married Sir William Bellingham, Bart.; Robert James; and George James, who, born in 1752, became Receiver-General of Excise, which office he held until his death in 1830. Cholmondeley lived until 1804, and his wife survived him seven years.

Walpole's fears, though not unnatural, happily proved to be groundless. She was, indeed, an acquisition to the family. Mrs. Cholmondeley was not only attractive: she was intelligent, and moved much in literary and artistic circles. Just before his death, in 1774, Oliver Goldsmith showed her the manuscript of his "Retaliation", which no one but Edmund Burke had seen. She is mentioned in James Boswell's "Tour to the Hebrides". Dr. Johnson described her as "a very airy lady"; and there is an anecdote about her in Murphy's biography of the great man which certainly indicates that she had a sense of humour: "Johnson, sitting at table with her, took hold of her hand in the middle of dinner, and held it close to his eye, wondering at the delicacy and the whiteness, till, with a smile she asked: 'Will he give it to me again when he has done with it?'" In 1775 she was at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, when, among the company was Johnson, Boswell, and Dr. Samuel Musgrave, the editor of *Euripides*. In that year, Fanny Burney wrote: "Mrs. Cholmondeley has been praising 'Evelina'. My father said that I could not

have had a greater compliment than making two such women my friends as Mrs. Thrale and Mrs. Cholmondeley, for they were severe, and afraid of praising *à tort et à travers*, as their opinions are liable to be quoted."

Family feuds are notoriously the most bitter. Within a few weeks of their father's death—or perhaps before—the three brothers were at loggerheads. In May, 1745, Edward wrote a very dictatorial letter, especially in respect of the representation of Castle Rising, the family borough. He wrote of himself as one "whose birth and seniority give me so just and natural a pretension"; to which Horace retorted: "To my father's estate before me; to nothing else that I know of." Walpole's reply is much too long to give here: it is very interesting as showing how he could express himself in his wrath. Yet, in spite of his indignation, he could write within a few days in a conciliatory strain: "Dear Brother, you have used me very ill without any provocation or any pretence. I have always made it my study to deserve your friendship, as you yourself own, and by a submission which I did not owe you. For consulting you in what you had nothing to do, I certainly did not, nor ever will, while you profess so much aversion for me. I am still ready to live with you upon any terms of friendship and equality; but I don't mind your anger, which can only hurt yourself, when you come to reflect with what strange passion you have treated me, who have always loved you, have always tried to please you, have always spoken of you with regard, and who will yet be, if you will let me, your affectionate brother and humble servant."

With his brother Edward, Walpole had trouble in connection with the office of Collector of the Cus-

toms, of which they were joint-holders, though in different proportion. He put his case before Henry Pelham, the First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; but before doing so, submitted a draft of the letter to Henry Fox. "I return you your very proper and genteel application to Mr. Pelham, which appears to be such that I really think it will succeed so far, at least, as that he will try it with the King," Fox replied on November 23rd, 1752. "I have been in doubt whether mentioning the very little self-denial that his getting this for you would be, was right. But you do it very civilly, and I am not sure that, without considering the matter, he may not think it a great one. Adieu! I heartily wish you success." Walpole, however, realised, upon reflection, that he could not proceed in the matter. "When I did myself the honour to apply to you last," he wrote to Pelham, "to beg your interest with the King that I might obtain the enjoyment of the patent for my own life, which now depends upon that of my brother, you told me that, if I could prevail upon my brother to consent that his life might be changed for mine, you would willingly undertake to serve me: you added very kindly (for which, Sir, whatever success I may have, I must always thank you) that no interest of your own should interfere with my suit. Indeed, Sir, the consideration of that would have prevented me, who am neither apt to ask, nor disposed to think that I have much title to, favours, from troubling you at first, if I had not reflected that what I begged was not so unreasonable, either from my brother's life being as good as my own, or at least if the event should happen of his death before mine, that the other large reversions attending it would make the emolument

which I must be obliged to hope to receive from it, appear of the less value to you. I do not mean, Sir, to detract from the very handsome manner in which you treated it, though I am desirous of not being thought to prefer an extravagant suit. My reason for troubling you again, Sir, is to represent to you, how impossible it will be for me to make any advantage of the method you proposed, as I cannot undertake the necessary steps. As the patent now stands, it is for my brother's life, but far the greater profits are given to me. If he dies, the whole drops: if I die first, the whole falls to him. What, therefore, I must have asked of him would be, not only to risk upon my life what he now enjoys for his own, but to resign his chance of the great benefit which he would reap from my death: in short, I must ask him to run all the risk instead of me. This, Sir, would be difficult to ask of any brother or any friend: unreasonable, I am afraid, to ask of one who has a large family; and impracticable, I am very sure, to obtain from one who, though I believe he loves me very well, I have no reason to think prefers me to himself. You will excuse my stating the case thus plainly, Sir, which after long consideration I think myself obliged to do, lest you should suppose that I have neglected to make advantage of your kindness to me. I hope you see that it is out of my power to obtain the previous conditions. If, without them, you will be so good as to serve me by adding my life, a request which I again make to you, there is nobody will be more pleased."

Walpole went to see Pelham. "He told me," he has recorded, "he had read my letter, and should have been very glad if I could have prevailed upon my brother to have consented to the alteration of

the patent; as it would have been only changing a life, not adding a new one. I said I believed he knew enough of my brother to know that was impossible. He said he had understood that was over. That as to asking a reversion, that was what he had never done, and what the King did not love to grant. That if he did ask it, the King would probably mention what I have already for my life: however, if I desired it, he would mention it to the King, though he did not believe it would succeed. I replied, he knew best, and took my leave."

Robert, second Earl of Orford, died on March 31st, 1751, leaving a most unsatisfactory will and his affairs considerably muddled. "His spoils are prodigious—not to his own family!" Walpole writes. "Indeed, I think his son the most ruined young man in England. My loss, I fear, may be considerable, which is not the only motive of my concern, though, as you know, I had much to forgive, before I could regret: but indeed I do regret. It is no small addition to my concern, to fear or foresee that Houghton and all the remains of my father's glory will be pulled to pieces! The widow-Countess immediately marries —not Richcourt, but Shirley, and triumphs in advancing her son's ruin by enjoying her own estate, and tearing away part of his." John Chute had so early as the winter of 1746 met young Lord Walpole, who now succeeded his father in the Earldom, and he reported his impressions to Horace Mann: "Oh! I must tell you: I was here last night, and saw my Lord Walpole for the first time, but such a youth! I declare to you, I was quite astonished at his sense and cleverness; it is impossible to describe it; it was just what would have made you so happy to observe as it did me: he is not yet seventeen, and is

to continue a year longer at Eton, upon his own desire. Alas! how few have I seen of my countrymen half so formed even at their return from their travels. I hope you will have him at Florence one day or other; he will pay you ample for the Pigwiggins, and——"

"Pigwiggin" was the name of Horatio, eldest son of Horatio Walpole, brother of Sir Robert, and so a cousin of Horace. "I must now notify to you," Horace Walpole wrote to Mann in March, 1748, "the approaching espousals of the most illustrious Prince Pigwiggin with Lady Rachel Cavendish, third daughter of the Duke of Devonshire: the victim does not dislike it! my uncle makes great settlements; and the Duke is to get a peerage for Pigwiggin, upon the foot that the father cannot be spared out of the House of Commons! Can you bear this old buffoon making himself of consequence, and imitating my father!"

Walpole liked his nephew when he first met him: "My private satisfaction in my nephew of Orford is very great indeed: he has an equal temper of reason and goodness that is most engaging." He interested himself in his welfare, as much, however, it may be assumed for the family as for the lad. The estate being much involved, he found for him an heiress of £150,000, a Miss Nicoll, whose dowry would have put things right. He placed her with the elder Horace Walpole at Wolterton, hoping that the young people might come to an arrangement; but the elder man thought the girl a better chance for one of his sons than for one of his nephews. Walpole never forgave his uncle for the disappointment it caused him; and, actually, he went so far as to write a narrative of the affair to expose him; but, his common sense coming presently

to the rescue, he thought this episode of the Walpole history had better be suppressed, and so it was never published. He was, however, very sad about the miscarriage of his plans. "If I could be mortified anew, I should be with a fresh disappointment," he wrote to Mann in May, 1751. "The immense and uncommon friendship of Mr. Chute had found a method of saving both my family and yours. In short, in the height of his affliction for Whithed, whom he still laments immoderately, he undertook to get Miss Nicoll, the vast fortune, a fortune of above £150,000, whom Whithed was to have had, for Lord Orford. He actually persuaded her to run away from her guardians, who used her inhumanly, and are her next heirs. How clearly he is justified, you will see, when I tell you that the man, who had £1,100 a year for her maintenance, with which he stopped the demands of his own creditors, instead of employing it for her maintenance and education, is since gone into the Fleet. After such fair success, Lord Orford has refused to marry her; why, nobody can guess. Thus had I placed him in a greater situation than ever his grandfather hoped to bequeath to him, had retrieved all the oversights of my family, had saved Houghton and all our glory! Now, all must go! My nephew talks of selling Houghton," he relates, "with a coolness that wants nothing but being intended for philosophy, to be the greatest that ever was. Mind, it is a virtue that I envy more than I honour." For the family seat was very sacred in his eyes. Four years later he expressed to Mann his revised opinion of his nephew. "You should be at least as little dupe of her affection for her son; the only proof of fondness she had ever given him has been expressing [Lady Orford's] concern at his wanting taste for Greek and

Latin," he wrote. "Indeed, he has not much encouraged maternal yearnings in her: I should have thought him shocked at the chronicle of her life, if he ever felt any impressions. But to speak freely to you, my dear Sir, he is the most particular young man I ever saw. No man ever felt such a disposition to love another as mine to him: I flattered myself that he would restore some lustre to our house; at least, not let it totally sink; but I am forced to give him up, and all my Walpole-views. I will describe him to you, if I can, but don't let it pass your lips. His figure is charming; he has more of the easy, genuine air of a man of quality than ever you saw; though he had a little hesitation in his speech, his address and manner are the most engaging imaginable: he has a good breeding and attention when he is with you, that is even flattering; you think he not only means to please, but designs to do everything that shall please you; he promises, offers everything one can wish—but this is all; the instant he leaves you, all the world are nothing to him—he would not give himself the least trouble in the world to give anybody the greatest satisfaction, yet this is mere indolence of mind, not of body—his whole pleasure is outrageous exercise. Everything he promises to please you is to cheat the present moment and hush any complaint—I mean of words; letters he never answers, not of business, not of his own business: engagements of no sort he ever keeps. He is the most selfish man in the world, without being the least interested: he loves nobody but himself, yet neglects every view of fortune and ambition. He has not only always slighted his mother, but was scarce decent to his rich old grandmother, when she had not a year to live, and courted him to receive

her favours. You will ask me what passions he had —none but of parade : he drinks without inclination ; has women, not without inclination, but without having them, for he brags as an old man ; games without attention ; he is immeasurably obstinate, yet, like obstinate people, governed as a child. In short, it is impossible not to love him when one sees him : impossible to esteem him when one thinks on him !"

Chapter V

STRAWBERRY HILL

WALPOLE, who felt the need of a *pied-à-terre* in the country, but not far from London, found in the summer of 1746 a house at Windsor, within the precincts of the Castle. This could scarcely be regarded as an extravagance, for the rent was only forty guineas a year and taxes, which latter were not very heavy; while furniture he had in abundance. "I am retired hither like an old summer dowager; only that I have no toad-eater to take the air with me in the back part of my lozenge-coach, and to be scolded," he wrote humorously to Mann from his new residence. "I have taken a small house here within the Castle, and propose spending the greatest part of every week here till the Parliament meets, but my jaunts to town will prevent my news from being quite provincial and marvellous. Then I promise you, I will go to no races nor assemblies, nor make comments upon couples that comes in chaises to the 'White Hart'." London he certainly did not desert, and he continued to lead the life of a man about town when he was staying in Arlington Street.

The great event in the life of Horace Walpole was the purchase, in 1747, of Strawberry Hill, in the neighbourhood of Twickenham, in the county of Surrey. The house which stood on the left bank of the river Thames, at the corner of the upper road

to Teddington, had even then a record. In the old leases, it was named Strawberry Hill Shot. It had been built in 1698 by the coachman of the Francis Newport, first Earl of Bradford, for a lodging house. The villagers called it Chopped-straw Hall, "they supposing that, by feeding his Lord's horses with chopped straw, he had saved enough money to build his house."

Colley Cibber was one of its first tenants, and it is said that while there he wrote a comedy, *The Refusal, or The Ladies' Philosophy*, an adaptation of Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes*, that was produced at Drury Lane in 1721, which, if this is true, more or less dates his residence. Later, for eight years, came Dr. William Talbot, who held, successively, the bishoprics of Oxford, Salisbury, and Durham. He died in 1730, leaving behind him the admirable reputation of having kept a good table—a fact which Walpole found it hard to believe, when he saw the size of the original kitchen. Next came Henry Bridges, Marquis of Carnavon, who succeeded his father in 1744 as (second) Duke of Chandos. After him, Mrs. Chevenix, the famous toy-woman, rented the place, which she presently let for two years to Lord John Philip Sackville, second son of Lionel, Duke of Dorset.

Walpole, in May, 1747, took over the remainder of Mrs. Chevenix's lease, and two years later purchased the fee simple, which was the property of three minors of the name of Mortimer. This proved a more complicated business than he had realised when he embarked upon it. "I hope to get my Bill finished in ten days," he wrote in May, 1749. "I have scrambled it through the Lords, but altogether, with the many difficulties and plagues, I am a good deal out of humour. My purchases hitch, and new

proprietors start out of the ground, like the crop of soldiers in the 'Metamorphosis' !" The price paid was £1,356 10s. Strawberry Hill was Walpole's chief interest for the remaining fifty years of his life ; at the beginning, it was but a mere toy ; but it proved to be a toy of which he never wearied. It is not too much to say that it became the be-all and end-all of his existence. At the time when he entered into possession there were only five acres of land—"land enough," he said, "to keep such a farm as Noah's, when he set up in the ark with a pair of each kind." He contrived, however, to secure nine more acres, which sufficed him. He made no further attempt to increase his territory.

What land he had acquired, he hastened to develop. He took an interest in horticulture, which was no less sincere because he was completely ignorant of the science—which ignorance he humorously admits : "My present and sole occupation is planting, in which I have made great progress, and talk very learnedly with the nurseryman, except that now and then a lettuce run to seed overturns all my botany, as I have more than once mistaken it for a curious West Indian flowering shrub. Then the deliberation with which trees grow is extremely inconvenient to my natural impatience. I lament living in so barbarous an age, when we are coming to so little perfection in gardening. I am persuaded that a hundred and fifty years hence, it will be as common to remove oaks a hundred and fifty years old, as it is now to transplant tulip roots." He liked to think that his tastes were becoming more simple. "I have made a vast plantation. Lord Leicester told me the other day that I would not buy some old china, because I was laying out all my money in trees. 'Yes,' said I, 'my Lord,

I used to like blue trees, and now I love green ones.' "

When Walpole took over Strawberry Hill, he used to call it a paper-house, the walls being very slight, and the roof not the most secure in heavy rain. Yet this—of course, presently the defects were remedied—did not hinder his enjoyment, nor lessen his enthusiasm. Thus, within a week or two of his entering into possession he described to Henry Seymour Conway, on June 8th, 1747, the place that was to be his house for life. "You perceive by my date that I am got into a new camp, and have left my tub at Windsor," he wrote. "It is a little plaything-house that I got out of Mrs. Chevenix's shop, and is the prettiest bauble you ever saw. It is set in enamelled meadows with filagree hedges:

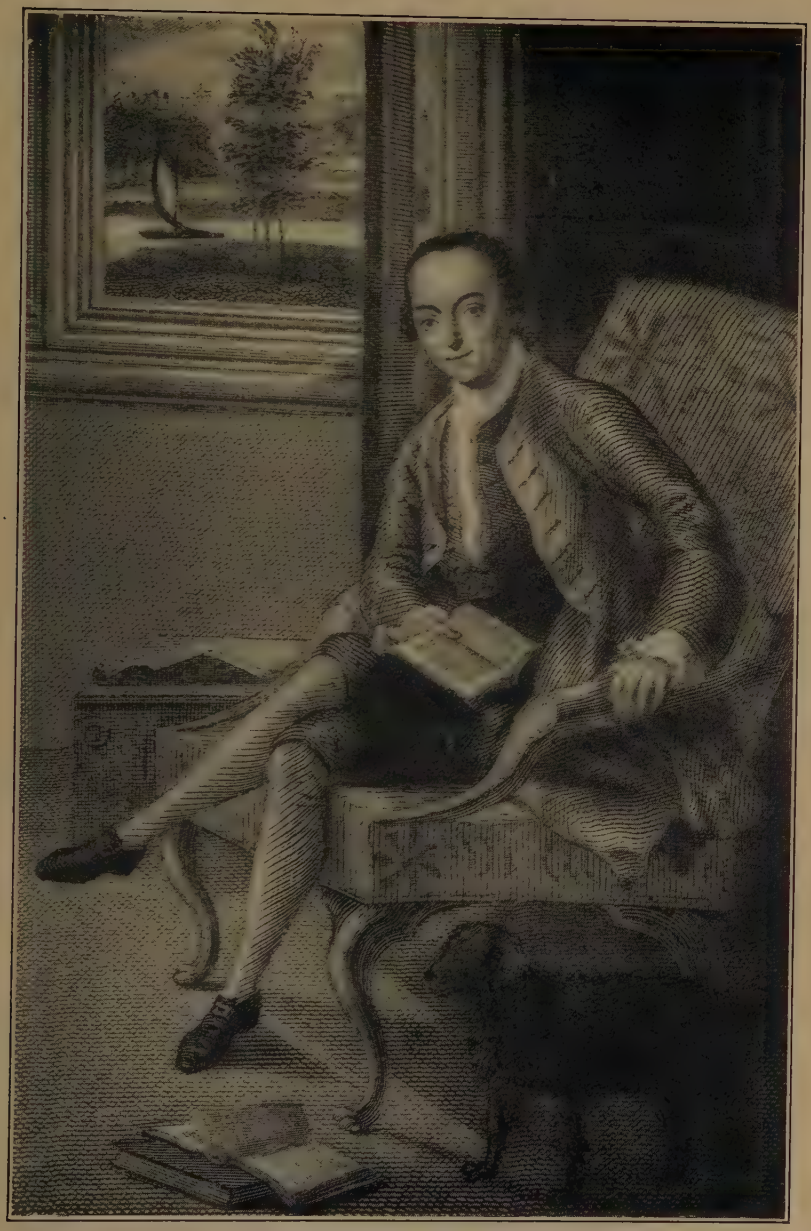
> "A small Euphrates through the piece is roll'd,
> And little finches wave their wings in gold.

Two delightful roads, that you would call dusty, supply me continually with coaches and chaises: barges as solemn as Barons of the Exchequer move under my window; Richmond Hill and Ham Walks bound my prospect; but, thank God! the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry. Dowagers as plenty as flounders inhabit all around, and Pope's ghost is just now skimming under my window by a most poetical moonlight. I have about land enough to keep such a farm as Noah's, when he set up in the ark with a pair of each kind; but my cottage is rather cleaner than I believe his was after they had been cooped up together forty days. The Chevenixes had tricked it out for themselves: up two pairs of stairs is what they call Mr. Chevenix's

library, furnished with three maps, one shelf, a bust of Sir Isaac Newton, and a lame telescope without any glasses. Lord John Sackville *predecessed* me here, and instituted certain games called *cricketalia*, which have been celebrated this evening in honour of him in a neighbouring meadow."

So delighted was Walpole with his acquisition, that it never occurred to him that he might weary his friends with descriptions of it. "The house is so small, that I can send it you in a letter to look at," he wrote to Horace Mann. "The prospect is as delightful as possible, commanding the river, the town, and Richmond Park; and, being situated on a hill, descends to the Thames through two or three little meadows, where I have some Turkish sheep and two cows, all studied in their colourings for colouring the view. The little rural *bijou* was Mrs. Chevenix's, the toy-woman *la mode*, who in every dry season is to furnish me with the best rain-water from Paris, and now and then with some Dresden China cows, who are to figure like wooden classics in a library; so that I shall grow as much a shepherd as any swain in the Astræa."

Again, to Horace Mann he wrote, on December 26th, 1748: "Did you ever know a more absolute country-gentleman? Here am I come down to what you call keep my Christmas! Indeed it is not in all the forms; I have stuck no laurel and holly in my windows, I eat no turkey and chine, I have no tenants to invite, I have not brought a single soul with me. The weather is excessively stormy, but has been so warm, and so entirely free from frosts the whole winter, that not only several of my honeysuckles are come out, but I have literally a blossom upon a nectarine-tree, which I believe was never seen in this



HORACE WALPOLE.
After Muntz.

climate before on the 26th of December. I am extremely busy here planting, I have got four more acres, which makes my territory prodigious in a situation where land is so scarce, and villas as abundant as formerly at Tivoli and Baiæ. I have now about fourteen acres, and am making a terrace the whole breadth of my garden on the brow of a natural hill, with meadows at the foot, and commanding the river, the village, Richmond Hill, and the Park, and part of Kingston."

Walpole soon began to improve and enlarge the structure. "I am going to build a little Gothic structure at Strawberry Hill," he writes in January, 1750; and he proceeded forthwith to do so.

He constructed a large refectory, the building of which engrossed him. "I have brought two of your letters to answer," he wrote to Mann in April, 1753. "In town there are so many idle people besides oneself, that one has not a minute's time: here I have whole evenings, after the labours of the day are ceased. Labours they are I assure you; I have carpenters to direct, plasterers to hurry, papermen to scold, and glaziers to help: this last is my greatest pleasure: I have amassed such quantities of painted glass, that every window in my castle will be illuminated with it: the adjusting and disposing it is vast amusement. I thank you a thousand times for thinking of procuring me some Gothic remains from Rome; but I believe there is no such thing there, I scarce remember any morsel in the true taste of it in Italy. Indeed, my dear Sir, kind as you are about it, I perceive you have no idea what Gothic is; you have lived too long amidst true taste, to understand venerable barbarism. You say, 'You suppose my garden to be Gothic, too.' That can't

be: Gothic is merely architecture, and as one has a satisfaction in imprinting the gloomth of abbeys and cathedrals on one's house, so one's garden, on the contrary, is to be nothing but *riant*, and the gaiety of nature. I am greatly impatient for my altar, and so far from mistrusting its goodness, I only fear it will be too good to expose to the weather, as I intend it must be, in a recess in the garden. I was going to tell you that my house is so monastic, that I have a little hall decked with long saints in lean arched windows and with taper columns, which we call the Paraclete, in memory of Eloisa's cloister."

Any account of Walpole without a description of Strawberry Hill is unthinkable, and therefore no apology is needed for the mention of the following letters.

To Horace Mann.

"Strawberry Hill, June 12, 1753.

"I could not rest any longer with the thought of your having no idea of a place of which you hear so much, and therefore desired Mr. Bentley to draw you as much idea of it as the post would be persuaded to carry from Twickenham to Florence. The enclosed enchanted little landscape, then, is Strawberry Hill, and I will try to explain so much of it to you as will help to let you know whereabouts we are when we are talking to you; for it is uncomfortable in so intimate a correspondence as ours not to be exactly master of every spot where one another is writing, or reading, or sauntering. This view of the castle is what I have just finished, and is the only side that will be at all regular. Directly before it is an open grove, through which you see a field, which is bounded

by a serpentine wood of all kind of trees, and flowering shrubs and flowers. The lawn before the house is situated on the top of a small hill, from whence to the left you see the town and church of Twickenham encircling a turn of the river, that looks exactly like a seaport in miniature. The opposite shore is a most delicious meadow, bounded by Richmond Hill, which loses itself in the noble woods of the Park to the end of the prospect on the right, where is another turn of the river, and the suburbs of Kingston as luckily placed as Twickenham is on the left: and a natural terrace on the brow of the hill, with meadows of my own down to the river commands both extremities. Is not this a tolerable prospect? You must figure that all this is perpetually enlivened by a navigation of boats and barges, and by a road below my terrace, with coaches, post-chaises, waggons, and horsemen constantly in motion, and the fields speckled with cows, horses, and sheep. Now you shall walk into the house. The bow-window below leads into a little parlour hung with stone-colour Gothic paper and Jackson's Venetian prints, which I could never endure while they pretended, infamous as they are, to be after Titian, etc., but when I gave them this air of barbarous bas-reliefs, they succeeded to a miracle: it is impossible at first sight not to conclude that they contain the history of Attila or Tottila, done about the very era. From hence, under two gloomy arches, you come to the hall and staircase, which it is impossible to describe to you, as it is the most particular and chief beauty of the castle. Imagine the walls covered with (I call it paper, but it is really paper painted in perspective to represent) Gothic fretwork: the lightest Gothic balustrade to the staircase, adorned with antelopes (our supporters) bearing

shields, lean windows fattened with rich saints in painted glass and a vestibule open with three arches on the landing-place, and niches full of trophies of old coats of mail, Indian shields made of rhinoceros's hides, broadswords, quivers, long bows, arrows, and spears—all *supposed* to be taken by Sir Terry Robsart in the holy wars. But as none of this regards the enclosed drawing, I will pass to that. The room on the ground floor nearest to you is a bedchamber, hung with yellow paper and prints, farmed in a new manner, invented by Lord Cardigan; that is, with black and white borders printed. Over this is Mr. Chute's bedchamber hung with red in the same manner. The bow-window room one pair of stairs is not yet finished; but the tower beyond it is the charming closet where I am now writing to you. It is hung with green paper and water-colour pictures, has two windows; the one in the drawing looks to the garden, the other to the beautiful prospect; and the top of each glutted with the richest painted glass of the arms of England, crimson roses, and twenty other pieces of green, purple, and historic bits. I must tell you, by the way, that the castle, when finished, will have two-and-thirty windows enriched with painted glass. In this closet, which is Mr. Chute's College of Arms, are two presses with books of heraldry and antiquities, Madame Sévigné's *Letters*, and any French books that relate to her and her acquaintance. Out of this closet is the room where we always live, hung with a blue and white paper in stripes adorned with festoons, and a thousand plump chairs, couches, and luxurious settees covered with linen of the same pattern, and with a bow-window commanding the prospect, and gloomed with limes that shade half each window, already darkened

with painted glass in chiaroscuro, set in deep blue glass. Under this room is a cool little hall, where we generally dine, hung with paper to imitate Dutch tiles.

"I have described so much, that you will begin to think that all the accounts I used to give you of the diminutiveness of our habitation were fabulous, but it is really incredible how small most of the rooms are. The only two good chambers I shall have are not yet built: they will be an eating-room and a library, each twenty by thirty, and the latter fifteen feet high. For the rest of the house, I could send it you in this letter as easily as the drawing, only that I should have nowhere to live till the return of the post. The Chinese summer-house, which you may distinguish in the distant landscape, belongs to my Lord Radnor. We pique ourselves upon nothing but simplicity, and have no carvings, gildings, paintings, inlayings, or tawdry businesses."

To Richard Bentley.

"Arlington Street, May 18, 1754.

"The little that I believe you would care to know relating to the Strawberry annals is, that the great tower is finished on the outside, and the whole whitened, and has a charming effect, especially as the verdure of this year is beyond what I have ever seen it: the grove nearest the house comes on much; you know I had almost despaired of its ever making a figure. The bow-window over the supper-parlour is finished, hung with a plain blue paper, with a chintz bed and chairs; my father and mother over the chimney in the Gibbons frame, about which you know we were in dispute what to do. I have fixed on black and gold, and it has a charming effect over

your chimney with the two dropping points, which is executed exactly; and the old grate of Henry VIII which you bought is within it. In each panel round the room is a single picture: Gray's, Sir Charles William's, and yours, in their black and gold frames; mine is to match yours, and on each side the door are the pictures of Mr. Churchill and Lady Mary, with their son on one side; Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury on the other. You can't imagine how new and pretty this furniture is. I believe I must get you to send me an attestation under your hand that you know nothing of it, that Mr. Rigby may allow that at least this one room was by my own direction. As the library and great parlour grow finished, you shall have exact notice."

Walpole, still obsessed by his country-house, began in 1760 to build a picture-gallery and cloister, a round-tower and a tribune. "The most important piece of news I have to tell you," he writes to George Montagu in August, 1763, "is that the gallery is finished." At the same time he notified the Earl of Strafford: "It has rained such deluges, that I had some thought of turning my gallery into an ark, and began to pack up a pair of bantams, a pair of cats; in short, a pair of every living creature about my house: but it is grown fine at last, and the workmen quit my gallery to-day, without hoisting a sail in it." In 1770 Walpole added a great north bed-chamber, and afterwards, from time to time, made minor additions.

Walpole was so delighted with the following lines, "In Praise of Strawberry Hill", written by the Earl of Bath, that he copied them for George Montagu and Bentley:

STRAWBERRY HILL

I

Some talk of Gunnersbury,
For Sion some declare;
And some say that with Chiswick House,
No villa can compare;
But all the beaux of Middlesex,
Who know the country well,
Say, that Strawberry Hill, that Strawberry
Doth bear away the bell.

II

Though Surrey boast its Oatlands,
And Claremont keeps so jim,
And though they talk of Southcote's,
'Tis but a dainty whim;
For ask the gallant Bristow,
Who does in taste excel,
If Strawberry Hill, if Strawberry
Don't bear away the bell.

Having, to quote Austin Dobson, "Gothicised the place to his heart's content with battlements and arches and painted glass ('lean windows fattened with rich saints'), he proceeded, or rather continued, to stock it with all the objects most dear to the connoisseur and virtuoso, pictures and statues, books and engravings, enamels by Petit and Zincke, miniatures by Cooper and the Olivers, old china, snuff-boxes, gems, coins, seal-rings, filigree, cut-paper, and nicknacks of all sorts." Nothing, indeed, came amiss to this cormorant; and Strawberry Hill was verily a curiosity shop where the goods were not for sale.

It would be dangerous to hazard a guess when Walpole began to collect. It may have been when he was at the University: he was well under way when he was at Florence in 1740. Of some of his earliest acquisitions there he wrote with justifiable pride to Richard West: "I have only bought some

bronzes and medals, a few busts, and two or three pictures; one of my busts is to be mentioned; 'tis the famous Vespasian in touchstone, reckoned the best in Rome, except the Caracalla of the Farnese. I gave but twenty-two pounds for it at Cardinal Ottoboni's sale. One of my medals is as great a curiosity: 'tis of Alexander Severus, with the amphitheatre in brass; this reverse is extant on medals of his, but mine is a *medalgiuncino*, or small medallion, and the only one with this reverse known in the world: 'twas found by a peasant while I was in Rome, and sold by him for sixpence to an antiquarian, to whom I paid for it seven guineas and a half: but to virtuosi 'tis worth any sum."

At Lord Oxford's sale in 1742, he made a few purchases: a small Vandyke, in imitation of Teniers; "Soldiers at Cards"; an old picture of the Duchess of Suffolk, mother of Lady Jane Grey, and her young second husband, Adrian Stoke, by Lucas de Heene; "A sweet bronze vase, and two or three other trifles."

When he settled at Strawberry Hill, he made the going hot and strong. He employed agents; he enlisted the good offices of his friends. He tells Mann that he is "going to build a little Gothic castle at Strawberry Hill", and adds: "If you can pick me up any fragments of old painted glass, arms, or anything, I shall be excessively obliged to you. I can't say I remember any such things in Italy; but out of old châteaux, I imagine one might get it cheap, if there is any."

Mann did well for him, and among the treasures he secured were an ebony box, with silver ornaments representing the Judgment of Paris, attributed to Benvenuto Cellini, from the Grand Duke; the bronze bust of Caligula, found at Herculaneum;

a jewel casket of ebony and ormolu, with tablets of Florentine mosaic in pictra dura, representing bouquets of flowers ; and the portrait of Bianca Capello, from the Vitelli Palace. It is not proposed here to enumerate the various articles that Walpole acquired. The curious will find all that can be desired in the quarto volume "A Description of the Villa of Horace Walpole. With an Inventory of the Furniture, Pictures, Curiosities, etc.", printed at his private press in 1774 ; or, better still, in the enlarged edition published ten years later. "The next time he (your nephew) visits you," he wrote to Mann, "I may be able to send you a description of my *galleria*. I have long been printing it, and it is almost finished —with some prints, which, however, I doubt, will convey no very adequate idea of it."

The private printing-press at Strawberry Hill, which he set up in a cottage near his house, was an abiding joy to Walpole, and upon it he lavished time and trouble and money.

It has already been mentioned that the first production was "Odes. By Mr. Gray". The press, he told John Chute, in July, 1757, "goes on as fast as if I printed it myself. I hope in a very few days to send you a specimen, though I could wish you was at the birth of the first produce."

To George Montagu he wrote : "The Poemata-Graye-Bentleiana, or Gray's *Odes*, better illustrated than ever odes were by a Bentley, are in great forwardness, and I trust will appear this winter. I shall tell you one little anecdote about the authors and conclude. Gray is in love to distraction with a figure of Melancholy, which Mr. Bentley has drawn for one of the *Odes*, and told him he must have something of his pencil : he close *Theodore and Honoria* !

—don't mention this, for we are shocked.—It is loving *melancholy* till it is not strong enough, and he grows to dram with *Horror*." The book, which was published by R. & J. Dodsley, in Pall Mall, London, appeared in August, 1757, the firm paying the author forty guineas, the only money he ever earned by his pen.

It had been Walpole's intention to launch his press with a translation by Richard Bentley of Paul Hentzer's "A Journey into England", in the year 1598; but he held this up to give precedence to Gray. It appeared, however, shortly after.

A more important work, which followed in the next year, was "A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England", which Walpole had written in five months. "My book is marvellously in fashion, to my great astonishment," he told George Montagu. "I did not expect that so much truth and such notions of liberty would have made their fortune in this our day. I am preparing an edition for publication, and then I must expect to be a little less civilly treated. My Lord Chesterfield tells everybody that he subscribes to all my opinions; but this mortifies me about as much as the rest flatter me; I cannot, because it is my own ease, forget how many foolish books he has diverted himself with commending. The most extraordinary thing I have heard about mine is that, it being talked of at Lord Arran's table, Doctor King, the Dr. King of Oxford, said of the passage on my father, 'It is very modest, very genteel, and very true.' I asked my Lady Cardigan if she could forgive my making free with her grandmother; she replied very sensibly, 'I am sure she would not have hindered anybody from writing against me; why should I be angry at any writing against her'."

Three hundred copies were printed; but so considerable was the demand that a second edition of two thousand copies was brought out speedily, though this was not printed at Strawberry Hill. So late as 1786, Walpole issued a Postscript to the work, which, he told Hannah More, was so little intended for the public that he printed but forty copies.

As regards the press, one may pass to the issue of "Anecdotes of Painting in England, with some Account of the Principal Artists; and incidental Notes on other Arts". This, says the title-page, was "collected by the late Mr. George Vertue; and now digested and published from his original MSS. by Mr. Horace Walpole". This considerable work was based upon Vertue's manuscript, which Walpole had bought for £100 from the widow some years before. On New Year's Day, 1760, he began the work, and finished the first two volumes during the year; but, as he complained bitterly, "the tediousness of engravers, and the roguery of a fourth printer, have delayed the publication week after week for months: truly, I do not believe that there is such a being as an honest printer in the world." The first two volumes appeared in 1762; the third in the following year; the fourth, to which was added "The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening", was not published until 1771. "I am very busy about the last volume of my 'Painters'," he wrote to George Montagu on June 11th, 1770; "but have lost my index, and am forced again to turn over all my Vertues, forty volumes of miniature manuscripts; as this will be the third time I shall make an index to them. Don't say I am not persevering, and yet I thought I was grown idle. What pains one takes to be forgotten. Good night!"

Walpole was at pains, quite rightly, of course, to express his indebtedness to Vertue ; he told Zouch : "You will be surprised, I think, to see what a quantity of material the industry of one man could amass." In the preface to the work, he wrote : "When one offers to the public the labours of another person, it is allowable and precedented to expiate in praise of the work. Of this indulgence, however, I shall not make advantage. The industry of Mr. Vertue was sufficiently known ; the antiquarian world had singular obligations to him. The many valuable monuments relating to our history, and to the persons of our monarchs and great men, which he saved from oblivion, are lasting evidences of his merit. . . . Mr. Vertue had for several years been collecting materials for this work : he conversed and corresponded with most of the virtuosi in England ; he was personally acquainted with the oldest performers in the science ; he minuted down everything he heard from them. He visited every collection, made catalogues of them, attended sales, copied every paper he could find relative to the art, searched offices, registers of parishes and registers of wills, for births and deaths, turned over all our own authors, and translated those of other countries which related to his subject. He wrote down everything he heard, saw, or read. His collections amounted to near forty volumes large and small. In one of his pocket-books I found a note of his first intention of compiling such a work ; it was 1713 ; he continued it assiduously to his death in 1757 [actually, on July 24th, 1756]. The manuscripts I bought of his widow after his decease ; and it will perhaps surprise the reader to find how near a complete work is offered to him, though the research was commenced at so late a

period: I call it commenced, for what little had been done before on this subject was as far from assistance, it was scarce of use."

Walpole was very modest about the "Anecdotes"—anyhow, on paper. "For the lives of English Artists," he wrote to Zouch at Christmas, 1759, "I am going immediately to begin it, and shall then fling it into the treasury of the world, for the amusement of the world for a day, and then for the service of anybody who shall happen hereafter to peep into the dusty drawer where it shall repose." Actually, he deserved more credit than he gave himself, for Vertue's manuscript was only the dry bones of the work: "Here and there," he said, "I have tried to enliven the dryness of the subject by inserting facts, not foreign to it. Yet, upon the whole, I despair of its affording much amusement. The public have a title to whatever was designed for them: I offer this to them as a debt—nobody will suspect that I have chosen such a subject for fame." Could humility go further than that which Walpole expressed in a letter to Sir David Dalrymple, the Scottish lawyer who took the title of Lord Hailes on his elevation to the bench: "You will find in the two volumes much, I fear, that will want your indulgence; and not only dryness, trifles, and, I conclude, many mistakes, but perhaps opinions different from your own. I can only plead my natural and constant frankness, which always speaks indifferently, as it thinks, on all sides and subjects. I am bigoted to none; Charles or Cromwell, Whigs or Tories, are all alike to me but in what I think they deserve, applause or censure; and therefore, if I sometimes commend, sometimes blame them, it is not from being inconsistent, but from considering them in the

single light in which I then speak of them ; at the same time meaning to give only my private opinion, and not at all expecting to have it adopted by any other man."

For some time Richard Bentley, the youngest child of the famous scholar of the same name, lived with Walpole at Strawberry Hill. "I am happy, Sir, that I have both your approbation to my opinion of Lucan, and to my edition of him ; but I assure you there will not be one word from me," Walpole wrote to the Rev. Henry Zouch in January, 1759. "I am sensible that it demands great attention to write even one's own language well : how can one pretend to purity in a foreign language ? to any merit in a dead one ? I would not *alone* undertake to correct the press ; but I am so lucky as to live in the strictest friendship with Dr. Bentley's only son, who, to all the ornament of learning, has the amiable turn of mind, disposition, and easy wit. Perhaps you may have heard that his drawings and architecture are admirable—perhaps you have not : he is modest —he is poor—he is consequently little known, less valued."

Walpole thought very highly of Bentley, and corresponded with him between 1752 until the latter came to Strawberry Hill about four years later. Walpole had at that time a great liking for him and a considerable admiration. He wrote of him, "whom I adore," as one "who has more sense, judgment, and wit, more taste and misfortunes than ever met in any man", and he wrote to him : "Your letters grow more and more entertaining, your drawings more and more picturesque ; you write with more wit, and paint with more melancholy, than ever anybody did."

HORACE WALPOLE.

Bentley designed a good deal of the Gothic architecture and decoration of Strawberry Hill; and, among other things, translated "A Journey into England in the year 1598", by Paul Hentzner, which Walpole printed in 1757. About four years later came a rupture in their friendship. The reason is obscure. It may just have been that their close association got on their nerves: it has, however, been said that Bentley was constantly borrowing money; while it is certain that Walpole objected to the constant presence of Mrs. Bentley, whom, he complained, her husband was "forward to introduce at his house when people of the first fashion were there."

Bentley, in 1755, introduced to Walpole John Henry Müntz, a painter of Swiss origin, whom he brought to England. Walpole employed him as a painter and engraver. He was very well satisfied with his work, and secured several of his pictures for the galleries of Strawberry Hill. "Hitherto," he wrote to Bentley, "he answers all you promised and named for him: he is very modest, humble, and reasonable; and has seen as much, and he knows so much of countries and languages that I am not likely soon to be tired of him. His drawings are very pretty; he has done two views of Strawberry that please me extremely; his landscape and trees are much better than I expected."

Walpole and he practised the art of encaustic painting, as revived by Count Caylus, and they projected a joint publication on the subject. When the book appeared in 1760, it bore only the name of Müntz on the title-page, for their association had ceased. A quarrel had arisen from an intrigue of the artist with one of the servants at Strawberry Hill.

It is true that he presently married the woman, but the incident led to his dismissal from Walpole's service. "I wish," Walpole wrote to George Montagu from Strawberry Hill, on October 2nd of that year, "you could have come here this October for more reasons than one. The Teddingtonian history is grown woefully bad. Marc Antony, though no boy, persists in losing the world two or three times over for every gipsy that he takes for a Cleopatra. I have laughed, been cool, scolded, represented, begged, and at last, spoken very roundly—all with equal success —at present we do not meet—I must convince him of ill-usage, before I can make good usage of any service to him. All I have done is forgot, because I will not be enamoured of Hannah Cleopatra too. You shall know the whole history when I see you; you may trust me for still being kind to him; but that he must not as yet suspect. They are bent on going to London, that she may visit and be visited, while he puts on his red velvet and ermine, and goes about begging in robes!"

Chapter VI

"THE PARISH REGISTER OF TWICKENHAM"

"I HAVE but a minute's time for answering your letter. My house is full of people, and has been so from the instant I breakfasted, and more are coming—in short, I keep an inn; the sign, 'The Gothic Castle'. Since my gallery was finished, I have not been in it quarter of an hour together; my whole time is passed in giving tickets for seeing it, and hiding myself while it is seen.—Take my advice, never build a charming house for yourself between London and Hampton Court: everybody will live in it but you." Thus he wrote playfully to George Montagu in 1763. In fact, he was never so happy as when showing his Gothic castle to his friends and acquaintances: if they had the knowledge of his collections all the better; but even if not, there was certain to be something to delight them, even if it was only the originality of the place. When he expected company, the first thing he did on waiting was to ask his man: "Does the sun shine?" If it did, then in spring and summer, Strawberry was all gold and green—to his great satisfaction.

His correspondence teems with references to his visitors. In May, 1755, he gave a great breakfast, and among those who came were the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, Lord Tavistock and Lady

Caroline, Lord and Lady Gower, Lady Caroline Egerton, Lady Betty Waldegrave, Lady Mary Coke, Mr. Churchill and Lady Mary, Mr. Bap. Leveson, and Colonel Sebright. Mrs. Pitt was also present, and brought her French horns which he placed in the corner of the wood, "and it was delightful. I am not apt to think that people really like it, that is, understand it," he tells Richard Bentley; "but I think the flattery of yesterday was sincere: I judge by the notice the Duchess took of your drawings" —a compliment in the grand manner.

In June of the same year, Walpole mentions to Bentley: "Princess Emily has been here—'Liked it?'—'Oh, no!'—I don't wonder; I never liked St. James's. She was so inquisitive and so curious in prying into the very offices and servants' rooms, that her Captain Bateman was sensible of it, and begged Catherine [Walpole's housekeeper] not to mention it. He addressed himself well, if he hoped to meet with taciturnity! Catherine immediately ran down to the pond, and whispered to all the reeds: 'Lord! that a princess should be such a gossip!' In short, Strawberry Hill is the puppet-show of the times." There is surely a note of smug self-satisfaction in this.

It would be tedious to give a list of all those who viewed Strawberry Hill, for its fame became European, and visitors from all countries came to inspect a place of which they had heard so much. A gathering there in June, 1764, pleased him much. "Strawberry," he mentions to George Montagu in a letter which he subscribes himself, "your poor beadsman, the Abbot of Strawberry, whose glories verge towards their setting, has been more sumptuous to-day than ordinary, and banqueted their representative majesties

of France and Spain. I had Monsieur and Madame de Geurchy, Mademoiselle de Nangis, their daughter, two other French gentlemen, the Prince of Masserano, his brother and secretary, Lord March, George Selwyn, Mrs. Ann Pitt, and my niece Waldegrave. The refectory never was so crowded: nor have any foreigners been here before that comprehended Strawberry. A violent shower in the morning laid the dust, brightened the green, refreshed the roses, pinks, orange-flowers, and the blossoms with which the acacias are covered. A rich storm of thunder and lightning gave a dignity of colouring to the heavens; and the sun appeared enough to illuminate the landscape, without basking himself over it at his length. During dinner there were French horns and clarionets in the cloister, and after coffee I treated them with an English and, to them, a very new collation, a syllabub milked under the cows that were brought to the brow of the terrace. Thence, they went to the printing-house, and saw a new fashionable French song printed. They drank tea in the gallery, and at eight went away to Vauxhall. They really seemed quite pleased with the place and the day; but I must tell you, the treasury of the abbey will feel it, for without magnificence, all was handsomely done. I must keep *maigre*—at least till the interdict is taken off from my convent. I have kings and queens, I hear in my neighbourhood, but this is no royal foundation."

Walpole, writing from Strawberry Hill in 1768, told Henry Seymour Conway that his life is most uniform and void of events, and that he has nothing worth repeating; that he has not a soul with him, but accidental company now and then at dinner. However, he mentions that Lady Holdernesse, Lady

Ancram, Lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Ann Pitt, and Mr. Hume dined with him two days before, and that when they were but just gone George Selwyn, Lord Bolingbroke, and Sir William Musgrave came in, at nine of night, to drink tea. He was, therefore, not devoid of society.

As a matter of fact, though he would never admit it, Walpole loved to entertain at Strawberry Hill, and to show the treasures of his house. He gave a great fête there in May, 1769, of which he wrote with evident pride to George Montagu :

"Strawberry has been in great glory—I have given a *festino* there that will almost mortgage it. Last Tuesday all France dined there : Monsieur and Madame du Châtelet, the Duc de Liancourt, three more French ladies, whose names you will find in the enclosed paper, eight other Frenchmen, the Spanish and Portuguese Ministers, the Holdernesses, Fitzroys, in short, we were four-and-twenty. They arrived at two. At the gates of the castle I received them, dressed in the cravat of Gibbons's carving, and a pair of gloves embroidered up to the elbows that had belonged to James I. The French servants stared, and firmly believed this was the dress of English country gentlemen. After taking a survey of the apartments, we went to the printing-house, where I had prepared the enclosed verses, with translations by Monsieur de Lisle, one of the company. The moment they were printed off, I gave a private signal, and French horns and clarionets accompanied the compliment. We then went to see Pope's grotto and garden, and returned to a magnificent dinner in the refectory. In the evening we walked, had tea, coffee, and lemonade in the gallery, which was illuminated with a thousand, or thirty, candles, I forget which, and

played whisk and loo till midnight. Then there was a cold supper, and at one the company returned to town, saluted by fifty nightingales, who, as tenants of the manor, came to do honour to their lord."

While always delighted to have visitors, Walpole had no liking for unheralded callers, and such were not made too welcome: whereby occurred a terrible catastrophe. "I have been much distressed this morning," he writes to Lord Hertford. "The royal family reside chiefly at Richmond, whither scarce necessary servants attend them, and no mortal else but Lord Bute. The King and Queen have taken to going about to see places; they have been at Oatlands and Wanstead. A quarter ten to-day, I heard the bell at the gate ring—truth is, I was not up, for my hours are not reformed, either at night or in the morning. I inquired who it was? The Prince of Mecklenburgh and De Witz had called to know if they could see the house; my two Swiss, Favre and Louis, told them I was in bed; but if they would call again in an hour, they might see it. I shuddered at this report—and would it were the worst part! The Queen herself was behind in a coach: I am shocked to death, and know not what to do! It is ten times worse now than ever at any other time: it will certainly be said that I refused to let the Queen see my house. See what it is to have republican servants! When I made a tempest about it, Favre said with the utmost *sang-froid*, 'Why could he not tell me he was the Prince of Mecklenburgh?' I shall go this evening and consult my oracle, Lady Suffolk. If she approves it, I will write to De Witz, and pretend I know nothing of anybody but the Prince, and beg a thousand pardons, and

assure him how proud I should be to have his master visit my castle at Thundertentronk."

When he had been at Strawberry Hill nearly two-score years, the fame of the place—to the owner's ill-concealed delight—was such that not only English folk but visitors from the Continent paid it a visit, almost as a matter of course. Upon this, Walpole commented humorously to the Countess of Upper Ossory: "Apropos to matrimony, I want to consult your Ladyship very seriously: I am so tormented by droves of people coming to see my house, and Margaret gets such sums of money by showing it, that I have a mind to marry her, and so repay myself that way for what I have flung away to make my house quite uncomfortable to me. I am sure Lord Denbigh would have proposed to her had he known of her riches; and I doubt Margaret could not have resisted the temptation of being a Countess more than Lady Holford. She certainly can never have a more disagreeable suitor: and therefore I grow every day more in danger of losing her and all her wealth. Mr. Williams said this morning that Margaret's is the best place in England, and wondered that Mr. Gilbert did not insist on knowing what it is worth. Thank my stars, he did not! Colonel Barré or Lord Ashburton would propose to suppress housekeepers and then humbly offer to show my house themselves, and the first would calculate what he had missed by not having shown it for the last ten years, and expect to be indemnified; for virtue knows to a farthing what it has lost by not having been vice. Good night, Madam; my poor rheumatic shoulder must go to bed."

Of individual visitors Lady Craven may perhaps be singled out for special notice. She was at

Strawberry Hill in 1775, when Walpole celebrated the occasion by striking off the following lines on his press :

"Genius, howe'er sublime, pathetic, free,
Trusts to the press for immortality.
To types would Craven her sweet lays prefer,
The press would owe immortal fame to her,
While she, too careless of so fair a face,
Would breathe eternal youth on every grace,
Ages unborn computing with surprise,
From her own wit the brightness of her eyes."

Lady Craven was not to be outdone in this sort of thing, and wrote a set of verses addressed to her host :

"Thus spoke the bard—While Craven, whom he sung,
In sad confusion bow'd her blushing head ;
Her downcast eyes bespoke the poet wrong,
And fear'd a satire in each word he said.

"Conscious that oft she felt the Muse's pow'r,
But conscious, too, she felt it oft in vain ;
Her heart to study ne'er had spar'd an hour,
That heart e'er bleeding at another's pain.

"Untaught and unconfin'd by learned rules,
Say, would you bid her trust her simple lays
To the rude eye of sense, or scorn of fools,
To envy, poison of her youthful days.

"Already has the face you deem so fair,
Unconscious, sown in many a female breast,
The bitter seed of envy's cank'ring care,
That bane of friendship—foe to woman's rest.

"Then spare, in pity, to some future day,
That praise, which all my sex would fain receive,
And let my life obscurely glide away,
Nor for one woman, many others grieve.

"So shall my careless hours, from envy free,
Be yet employed in silence with each Muse,
But yield to you that immortality,
Which I with grateful caution must refuse."

These two sets of verses were not printed until they appeared in the *Monthly Review* for April and May, 1801; but that they were in existence was known to several people, and the Countess of Ossory asked for a copy.

"I certainly did not send you, Madam, Lady Craven's verses, nor intend it, though they were extremely pretty," Walpole wrote. "She did not give me leave and, without it, you know I would not. Nay, I don't think I should, even with her permission, for she makes an Apollo of me, and if the eight other Muses called me so too, I would not accept the title without any pretensions."

Walpole was at this time on very friendly terms with Lady Craven, and he paid her the high compliment of printing at the press in August 1778, *The Sleep-Walker*, her version of Pont de Vile's comedy, *La Somnambule*.

"I shall be in town in a few days, and will send you the heads of Painters, which I left there," Walpole wrote to the Rev. William Cole in 1778, "and along with them, for yourself, a translation of a French play, that I have just printed there. It is not for your reading, but as one of the Strawberry editions, and one of the rarest; for I have printed but seventy-five copies. It was to oblige Lady Craven, the translatress."

In spite of his liking for Lady Craven, Walpole could not restrain his caustic humour. "There has been such an uncommon event that I must give you an account of it, as it relates to the Republic of Poetry, of which you are President, and to the Aristocracy of Noble Authors, to whom I am Gentleman Usher," he tells Mason in the spring of 1780. "Lady Craven's comedy, called 'The Miniature Picture', which she acted herself with a genteel set

at her own house in the country, has been played at Drury Lane. The chief singularity was that she went to it herself the second night in form; sat in the middle of the front row of the stage-box, much dressed, with a profusion of white bugles and plumes, to receive the public homage due to her sex and loveliness. The Duchess of Richmond, Lady Harcourt, Lady Edgecumbe, Lady Ailesbury, Mrs. Damer, Lord Craven, General Conway, Colonel O'Hara, Mr. Lennox, and I were with her. It was amazing to see so young a woman entirely possess herself, but there is such an integrity and frankness in her consciousness of her own beauty and talents, that she speaks of them with a *naïveté* as if she had no property in them, but only wore them as gifts of the Gods. Lord Craven, on the contrary, was quite agitated by his fondness for her, and with impatience at the bad performance of the actors, which was wretched indeed, yet the address of the plot, which is the chief merit of the piece, and some lively pencilling, carried it off very well, though Parsons murdered the Scotch Lord, and Mrs. [Mary Ann ('Perdita')] Robinson (who is supposed to be the favourite of the Prince of Wales) thought on nothing but her own charms or him. There is a very good though endless Prologue written by Sheridan, and spoken in perfection by King, which was encored (an entire novelty) the first night; and an Epilogue that I liked still better, and which was full as well delivered by Mrs. Abingdon, written by Mr. Jekyll. The audience, though very civil, missed a fair opportunity of being gallant; for in one of those -logues, I forget which, the noble authoress was mentioned, and they did not applaud as they ought to have done exceedingly when she condescended to avow her pretty

child, and was there looking so very pretty. I could not help thinking to myself how many deaths Lady Harcourt would have suffered rather than encounter such an exhibition; yet Lady Craven's tranquillity had nothing displeasing—it was only the ease that conscious pre-eminence bestows on Sovereigns, whether their empire consists in power or beauty. It was the ascendant of Millamont and Lady Betty Modish and Indamore; and it was tempered by her infinite good nature, which made her make excuses for the actors instead of being provoked at them. I have brought hither her portrait and placed it in the favourite Blue Room."

Lady Craven and her husband separated in 1783, when, taking with her her youngest son, Richard Keppel Craven, she went to France, and took a house at Versailles. Among her visitors, no one was more frequent than a nephew of Frederick the Great, Christian Frederick Charles Alexander, Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, and Bayreuth. A suspicious world accepted the probability that the relations were not platonic, although Lady Craven asserted that they were. Anyhow, there is no question but that the Margrave was her very humble servant. However, she soon left Paris on an extended tour, accompanied by Henry Vernon, a great-nephew of the Admiral of that name, and a son of Henry and Lady Harriet Vernon.

"Our discarded B-r-n-ess, being now at liberty, went beyond seas in search of liberty," Charles Pigott wrote in his scandalous work "The Jockey Club", "and there she took up as a *companion de voyage*, the celebrated and *veracious* H[enr]y V[erno]n. They visited divers and distant parts of the world. Their adventures were wonderful. They breakfasted with

the Empress of Russia, they dined with the Grand Signor, and supped with the Great Mogul."

A more reliable authority than Pigott for her Ladyship's misconduct is Horace Walpole. "I did send you a line last week in the cover of a letter to Lady Craven, which I knew would sufficiently tell your quickness how much I shall be obliged to you for any attentions to her," he tells Mann. "I thought her at Paris, and was surprised to hear of her at Florence. She has, I fear, been *infinitamenta* indiscreet ; but what is that to you or me ? She is very pretty, has parts, and is good-natured to the greatest degree ; has not a grain of malice or mischief (almost always the associates, in women, of tender hearts), and never has been an enemy but to herself." Clearly, Walpole had a soft spot in his heart for her. Anyhow, he kept in touch with her.

In 1789 appeared "A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople. In a Series of Letters from the Right Honourable Elizabeth Lady Craven to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandenburg, Anspach, and Bereith." Whereupon, Walpole wrote to the Countess of Ossory : "Lady Craven's 'Travels' I received from Robson two hours ago. Dodsley brought the MS. to me before I came to town ; but I positively refused to open it, though he told me my name was mentioned in it several times ; but I was conscious how grievous it would be to her family and poor daughters, and therefore persisted in having nothing to do with it. I own I have now impatiently cut the leaves in search of my own name, and am delighted on finding it there but thrice, and only by the initial letter. When I have the honour of seeing your Ladyship, I can tell you many collateral circumstances ; but I will not put them on

paper. I fear she may come to wish, or should, that *she* had not been born with a propensity to writing."

Walpole has something more to record of Lady Craven a little later in a letter to the Misses Berry on August 23rd, 1791: "Well, but you, who have had a fever with *fêtes*, had rather hear the history of the *soi-disante* Margravine. She has been in England with her foolish Prince; but not only notified their marriage to the Earl [of Berkeley], her brother, who did not receive it propitiously, but his Highness informed his Lordship by a letter, that they have an usage in his country of taking a wife with the left hand; that he had espoused his Lordship's sister in that manner, and intends, as soon as she shall be a widow, to marry her with his right hand also. The Earl replied, that he knew she was married to an English peer, a most respectable man, and can know nothing of her marrying any other man; and so they are gone to Lisbon."

The Earl of Craven died in September, 1791, when his wife was with the Margrave at Lausanne, where the news reached her. "As by the death of Lord Craven," his widow wrote, "I felt myself released from all ties, and at liberty to act as I thought proper, I accepted the hand of the Margrave without fear or remorse. We were married in the presence of one hundred persons, and attended by all the English naval officers, who were quite delighted to act as witnesses."

Walpole commented on this humorously.

"Oh!" he wrote to the Countess of Ossory on November, 23rd, 1791. "I this moment recollect to tell your Ladyship that Lady Craven received the news of her Lord's death on a Friday, went into weeds on Saturday, and into white satin and *many* diamonds on Sunday, and in that vestral trim was

ELIZABETH, COUNTESS OF CRAVEN.
After Romney.

married to the Margrave of Anspach by my cousin's chaplain, though he and Mrs. Walpole excused themselves from being present. The bride excused herself for having so *few* diamonds; they had been the late Margravine's; but she is to have many more, and will soon set out for England, where they shall astound the public by living in a style of magnificence unusual, as they are richer than anybody in this country. The Dukes of Bedford, Marlborough, and Northumberland may hide their diminished rays!"

Walpole, however, was not dependent on visitors for society, since there was in the neighbourhood a goodly company of folk, more or less congenial, and with many of them he was only friendly, if not always on intimate terms. Also, he solaced himself with the local ghosts, as he indicates in his "Parish Register of Twickenham".

"THE PARISH REGISTER AT TWICKENHAM

"Where silver Thames round Twit'nam meads
His winding current sweetly leads;
Twit'nam, the Muses' fav'rite seat,
Twit'nam, the Graces' lov'd retreat;
There polish'd Essex[1] went to sport,
The pride and victim of a Court!
There, Bacon tuned the grateful lyre
To soothe Eliza's haughty ire.
Ah! happy had no meaner strain
Than friendships darked his mighty vein!
Twit'nam, where Hyde[2], majestic sage,
Retir'd from folly's frantic stage,
While his vast soul was hung on tenters,
To mend the world and vex Dissenters.
Twit'nam, where frolic Wharton[3] revell'd,
Where Montagu[4], with locks dishevel'd,
(Conflict of dirt and warmth divine),

[1]Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex. [2]Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarendon. [3]Philip, Duke of Wharton. [4]Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Invok'd and scandalis'd the Nine.
Where Pope in moral music spoke
To th' anguish'd soul of Bolingbroke,
And whisper'd how true genius errs,
Preferring joys that power confers;
Bliss never to great minds arising
From ruling worlds, but from dispising:
Where Fielding met his bunter Muse
And, as they quaff'd the fiery juice,
Dame Nature stamp'd each lucky hit
With unimaginable wit:
Where Suffolk[1] sought the peaceful scene,
Resigning Richmond to the Queen[2],
And all the glory, all the teasing,
Of pleasing one[3], not worth the pleasing;
Where Fanny[4], ever blooming fair,
Ejaculates the grateful pray'r,
And, scap'd from sense, with nonsense smit
For Whitfield's cant leaves Stanhope's[5] wit:

Amid this choir of sounding names
Of statesmen, bards, and beauteous dames,
Shall the last trifler of the throng
Enrol his own such names among?
Oh, no! Enough if I consign
To lasting type their notes divine:
Enough if Strawberry's humble hill
The title-page of fame shall fill."

To this, in 1784, he added a complimentary "postscript", introducing Lady Diana Beauclerk, who illustrated "The Mysterious Mother":

"Here genius in a later hour
Selected its requester'd bower,
And threw around the verdant room
The blushing lilacs' chill perfume.
So loose is flung each bold festoon—

[1]Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk. [2]Queen Caroline. [3]George II. [4]Lady Frances Shirley. [5]Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield.

> Each bough so breathes the touch of noon—
> The happy pencil so deceives,
> That Flora doubly jealous cries,
> 'The works not mine—yet, trust these eyes,
> 'Tis my own zephyr waves the leaves.' "

Among the residents at Twickenham were old Sir Samuel Prime and his wife, who lived in the hamlet of Whitton, at Kneller Hall, that had once been the home of Sir Godfrey Kneller, who had himself decorated the staircase—the property, in the course of nature, passed to their son, Samuel. This distinguished lawyer is now to most but a name, Sir John Hawkins's account of him will not come amiss: "A man of the highest honour and integrity in his private character, and of the first eminence in his profession; but as popular excellence is most apt to incite popular admiration, he was more honoured as what is called among the lawyers a 'nisi prices' counsel; though, in fact, in the estimation of competent judges, equally excellent as a profound lawyer. He might, more than once, I believe, have been on the bench; but owing to a certain quickness of feeling, which he conceived inconsistent with the situation of a judge, he, from conscientious motives, declined it."

John Hawkins—he was not knighted until after he left Twickenham in 1771—having come into a fortune in 1759, abandoned the practice of the law, and settled down as a country gentleman in that village. He had always had a taste for letters, and devoted much of his leisure to his hobby. It was Walpole who suggested that he should write "The General History of the Science and Practice of Music", and took the trouble to secure for him, through Mann, Italian books on the subject. The book appeared in

1776, in which year also appeared Dr. Burney's history of music, which gave rise to comparisons, usually unfavourable to Hawkins. It was, of course, many years later when he wrote his biography of Dr. Johnson. His son, John Sidney, acquired distinction as an antiquarian ; and his daughter, Letitia Matilda, published a volume of reminiscences in 1822. As they were only children when this "most unclubbable man", as Johnson dubbed Hawkins, removed to London, it is almost impossible that the lady can have had any great knowledge of Walpole, yet she wrote intimately of him : "I have heard Mr. Walpole accused of excessive want of hospitality. This is a deficiency generally arising from a love of money, which he had not. A man who had condemned himself to an almost monkish abstemiousness, could not keep a table for casual visitors—his visitors were seldom casual. From his correspondence, it appears that he had a great resort for guests ; but I am much mistaken if his servants were not on board wages." However, she made some amends in the following sentence : "As a master, he was loved by all his domestics—a change in his establishment would have excited the wonder and curiosity of all Twickenham."

At Colne Lodge lived Paul Whitehead, the author of a satire in heroic couplets, "State Dunces", the chief Dunce being Sir Robert Walpole. He was a friend of Francis Dashwood, Lord le Despencer, and acted as honorary secretary and steward of the Monks of Medmenham. Dashwood, when Chancellor of the Exchequer during Bute's short-lived Administration in 1762, appointed him to a post in the Treasury worth £800 a year. This enabled him to enlarge the cottage on Twickenham Common in which he had resided for some years. Walpole mentions

him as one of the celebrities of the neighbourhood, and he had the doubtful distinction of being pilloried by Charles Churchill.

Another man of letters near by was Richard Owen Cambridge, who purchased Cambridge House in 1751. An agreeable companion even though, as Walpole put it, he used "to tell three stories to make you understand a fourth". Dr. Johnson thought highly of him and discussed the classics with him; and he has the honour to be enshrined in "Boswell": "I gratefully acknowledge this and other communications from Mr. Cambridge, whom, if a beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, a few miles distant from London; a numerous and excellent library, which he accurately knows and reads; a choice collection of pictures, which he understands and relishes; an easy fortune; an amiable family; an extensive circle of friends and acquaintance, distinguished by rank, fashion, and genius; a literary fame, various, elegant, and still increasing; colloquial talents rarely to be found; and, with all these means of happiness, enjoying, when well advanced in years, health, and vigour of body, serenity and animation of mind—do not entitle to be addressed *fortunate senex*! I know not to whom, in any age, that expression could with propriety have been used." A good-natured man, he once remarked: "The world has given me credit beyond what I deserve, for the witty things I may have said; but I have infinitely more merit for those I have suppressed."

Then there was Joseph Hickey, an attorney with a considerable practice, mentioned by Walpole as "Mr. Hickey, the impudent lawyer that Tom Hervey wrote against", and the father of William, the diarist. Oliver Goldsmith, in his poem "Retaliation",

describing the feast to which "each guest brought himself", introduces Hickey as "the capon", and mentions him as "a most pleasant, blunt fellow", and adds:

> ". . . that slander itself must allow him good nature,
> He cherish'd his friend, and he relish'd a bumper.
> Yet one fault he had, and that was a thumper—
> And what was his failing? Come, tell it and burn ye—
> He was—could he help it?—a special attorney."

Pope's Villa, after the death of the poet in 1744, was bought by Sir William Stanhope, brother of the famous Earl of Chesterfield, himself a politician and a man of fashion, who promptly did much to destroy the unique charm of the place sacred to a great and abiding memory. Walpole was horrified at this vandalism. "The house," he wrote, "was so small and bad, one could not avoid his hollowing out that fragment of the rock Parnassus into habitable chambers; but, would you believe it, he has cut down the sacred groves themselves! In short, it was a little piece of ground of five acres enclosed within three lanes, and seeing nothing. Pope had twisted and twirled and rhymed and harmonised this, till it appeared two or three sweet little lawns opening and opening beyond another, and the whole surrounded with thick, impenetrable woods. Sir William, by advice of his son-in-law, Mr. Ellis, has hacked and hewed these groves, wriggled a winding gravel walk through them, with a hedging of shrubs, in what they call the modern taste, and, in short, has devised the three lanes to walk in again; and now is forced to shut them out again by a wall, for there was not a nurse could walk there but she was spied by every country fellow that went by with a pipe in his mouth." Nor was Walpole better pleased,

it may be imagined, with the lines, written by Lord Clare, which were placed above one of the subterranean passages :

> "The humble roof, the garden's scanty line,
> I'll suit the genius of the bard divine ;
> But fancy now displays a fairer scope,
> And Stanhope's plans unfold the soul of Pope."

The Chesterfield family had another association with Twickenham, for Lady Frances Shirley, the mistress of the fourth Earl, lived there for many years prior to her death in 1788. She was the heroine of Chesterfield's song, "When Fanny, blooming fair". Pope addressed verses to her, and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams commemorated her love-affair in his poem "Morning" :

> "Says Lovell—'There were Chesterfield and Fanny,
> In that eternal whisper which began
> Ten years ago, and never will be done,
> For though, you know, he sees her every day,
> Still he has ever something new to say ;
> He never lets the conversation fall,
> And I'm sure Fanny cannot keep up the ball ;
> I saw that her replies were never long,
> And with her eyes she answered for her tongue'."

Another aristocrat, who inhabited Poulett Lodge, which was built by Dr. Batty in 1734, was Vere, third Earl Poulett, and after his death in 1788 the Dowager-Countess remained there, being later succeeded by Mrs. Osbaldiston, with her ten children.

Gifford Lodge was the residence, first, of Lord Kingston, and then of the Marchioness of Tweeddale, widow of John, the fourth Marquis, *née* Lady Frances Carteret, daughter of the Earl of Granville. The

Marchioness subsequently lived on Ham Common, where she died in 1788. Her successor at Gifford Lodge was General John Gunning, brother of the beautiful Miss Gunning, the three sisters who became subsequently Duchess of Hamilton, Duchess of Argyle, and Lady Coventry. He married, in 1768, Susannah Minifie, of Fairwater, Somersetshire. He left the country with a Mrs. Duberley about 1790, and a British jury awarded the lady's husband £5,000 damages. It is only fair to the General to add that his daughter, Elizabeth, had behaved disgracefully, and that his wife, siding with the girl, had also left him. Both ladies wrote works of fiction, and of the elder woman's novels, Gordon Goodwin, probably the only man who read them in the latter part of the nineteenth century, says that, while many of them ran through several editions, they "are exceedingly harmless; an absence of plot forming their most original characteristic."

Another neighbour, who arrived early in 1762, was Thomas Pitt, presently raised to the peerage as Lord Camelford, a nephew of the first Earl of Chatham, and himself a politician and a connoisseur. He took a small house within a stone's-throw of Walpole's residence. "This will add to the comfort of my Strawberry-tide. He draws Gothic with taste, and is already engaged on the ornaments of my cabinet and gallery," he told Mann shortly after the newcomer's arrival; and shortly after he wrote to Montagu: "I knew you would be pleased with Mr. T. Pitt. He is very amiable and very sensible, and one of the very few that I reckon quite worthy of being at home at Strawberry." Than which, Walpole could pay no higher compliment.

Not far away from Strawberry Hill was Marble

Hill. The exact date when Henrietta Howard, Duchess of Suffolk, with the £10,000 or £12,000 given to her by her lover, George II, for that purpose, purchased the property, which was situated between Richmond Bridge and Orleans House, is not known; but writing in July, 1723, to John Gay, she says, "I beg you will never mention the plan which you found in my room. There is a necessity to keep the whole affair secret, though (I think I may tell you) it is almost entirely finished to my satisfaction." The reason for keeping the matter dark was that Lord Islay (afterwards third Duke of Argyle), acting for her, had not at that moment settled all the complicated agreements with various owners of the house and grounds.

When Mrs. Howard, as she then was, came into possession, her friends rallied round her. The Earl of Pembroke charged himself with the plans of the mansion. "His intention," Cobbett has written, "was evidently to make the rooms on the first floor of most imposing proportions, and to effect this the height of the lower and upper stories has been somewhat unduly sacrificed. The staircase is made entirely of finely carved mahogany, and some of the floors are of the same wood. It is said that the unceremonious way in which one of the King's naval officers felled the trees required for this purpose in the Bay of Honduras very nearly caused a war." The Earl of Burlington superintended the interior decorations; Pope and Earl Bathurst laid out the grounds; Dr. Arbuthnot and Gay organised the household; and, at a later date, Swift appointed himself custodian of the wine-cellars.

Mrs. Howard was in residence in 1725, and she spent so much on Marble Hill that in two years she

thought she would have to sell it to save herself from penury—a point Swift humorously dwelt upon in "A Pastoral Dialogue" :

"My house was built but for a show,
My Lady's empty pockets know ;
And now she will not have a shilling
To raise the strain, or build the ceiling ;
For all the courtly madams round
Now pay four shillings in the pound ;
'Tis come to what I always thought :
My dame is hardly worth a groat.

"No more the Dean, that grave divine,
Shall keep the store of my no—wine ;
My ice-house rob, as heretofore.
And steal my artichokes no more ;
Poor Patty Blount no more be seen
Bedraggled in my walks so green :
Plump Johnny Gay will now elope ;
And here no more will dangle Pope.

"Some South Sea broker from the City
Will purchase me, the more's the pity ;
Lay all my fine plantations waste,
To fit them to his vulgar taste."

The catastrophe of having to sell Marble Hill was averted, and Henrietta Howard (now Countess of Suffolk), her husband having succeeded to the earldom in 1731, retained possession until her death in 1767, when she was in her eightieth year. Walpole, who visited her frequently, saw her shortly before she passed away. After she had gone, he paid her a handsome and a sincere tribute : "I never knew a woman more respectable for her honour and principles, and have lost few people in my life whom I shall miss so much."

That he was sincerely grieved at the death of his neighbour is further evinced by his letter to the Earl of Strafford, within three days after she had passed away. "I am very sorry that I must speak of a loss that will give you and Lady Strafford concern; an essential loss to me, who am deprived of a most agreeable friend, with whom I passed here many hours. I need not say I mean poor Lady Suffolk," he wrote. "I was with her two hours on Saturday night; and, indeed, found her much changed, though I did not apprehend her in danger. I was going to say she complained—but you know she never did complain—of the gout and rheumatism all over her, particularly in her face. It was a cold night, and she sat below stairs when she should have been in bed; and I doubt this want of care was prejudicial. I sent next morning. She had a bad night; but grew much better in the evening. Lady Dalkeith came to her; and when she was gone, Lady Suffolk said to Lord Chetwynd she should eat her supper in her bed-chamber. He went up with her, and thought the appearances promised a good night; but she was scarce sat down in her chair, before she pressed her hand to her side, and died in half an hour.

"I believe both your Lordship and Lady Strafford will be surprised to hear that she was by no means in the situation that most people thought. Lord Chetwynd and myself were the only persons at all acquainted with her affairs, and they were far from being even easy to her. It is due to her memory to say that I never saw more strict honour and justice. She bore *knowingly* the imputation of being covetous, at a time that the strictest economy could by no means prevent her exceeding her income considerably. The anguish of the last years, though concealed,

flowed from the apprehension of not satisfying her few wishes, which were not to be in debt, and to make a provision for Miss Hotham. I can give your Lordship strong instances of the sacrifices she tried to make to her principles. I have not yet heard if her will is opened; but it will surprise those who thought her rich. Lord Chetwynd's friendship, too, has been unalterably kind and zealous, and is not ceased. He stays in the house with Miss Hotham till some of the family come to take her away. I have perhaps dwelt too long on this subject, but, as it was not permitted me to do her justice when alive, I own I cannot help wishing that those who had a regard for her may now at least know how much more she deserved it than even they suspected. In truth, I never knew a woman more respectable for her honour and principles, and have lost few persons in my life whom I shall miss so much."

The arts were not ill-represented at Twickenham. There was the architect, Sir William Chambers, who designed many mansions; but is perhaps best remembered for the erection, in what is now known as Kew Gardens, of several semi-Roman buildings, which were sneered at by his contemporaries as being "unmeaning falballas of Turkish and Chinese chequer-work". He was high in the royal favour, and it has been recorded that Majesty itself approved his Pagoda at Kew. The portrait-painter, Thomas Hudson, lived in a house near Pope's Villa which he built for himself, and occupied until his death in 1779.

Walpole was always interested in the stage and in actors and actresses, and in his correspondence there are many allusions to the drama and its

exponents. One example shall here suffice. "There is a little simple farce at Drury Lane, called 'Miss Lucy in Town' [partly written by Henry Fielding], in which Mrs. Clive mimics the Muscovita admirably, and John Beard, Amorevoli intolerably. But all the run is now after Garrick, a wine-merchant, who is turned player, at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic," he wrote to Mann on May 26th, 1742. "His acting I have seen, and say to you, who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it; but it is heresy to say so: the Duke of Argyle says he is superior to Betterton. Now I talk of players, tell Mr. Chute that his friend Anne Bracegirdle breakfasted with me this morning. As she went out, and wanted her clogs, she turned to me, and said, 'I remember at the playhouse, they used to call Mrs. Oldfield's chair, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Barry's clogs, and Mrs. Bracegirdle's pattens!'"

Twickenham and its neighbourhood attracted the heads of the theatrical profession. Mrs. Pritchard bought Rayman's Castle in 1755, but only survived her purchase three years. "Peg" Woffington, too, lived there for a time with Colonel Cæsar, to whom, it was generally supposed, she was secretly married.

"I have contracted a sort of intimacy with Garrick, who is my neighbour [at Hampton]," Walpole wrote to Richard Bentley on August 4th, 1755. "He affects to study my taste: I lay it all upon you—he admires you. He is building a graceful temple to Shakespeare: I offered him this motto: *'Quod spiro et places, si places tuum est.'* Don't be surprised if you should hear of me as a gentleman coming upon the stage next winter for my diversion. The truth is, I make the most of this acquaintance to protect my poor neighbour at *Cliveden*—you understand the conun-

drum, Clive's den." And eleven days later he relates to the same correspondent: "I dined to-day at Garrick's: there were the Duke of Grafton, Lord and Lady Rockford, Lady Holdernesse, the crooked Mostyn, and Dabreu, the Spanish Minister; two regents, of which one is Lord Chamberlain, the other Groom of the Stole; and the wife of a Secretary of State. This is being *sur un assez bon ton* for a player! Don't you want to ask me how I like him? Do want, and I will tell you.—I like her exceedingly; her behaviour is all sense, and all sweetness, too. I don't know how he does not improve so fast upon me: there is a great deal of parts, and vivacity, and variety, but there is a great deal, too, of mimicry and burlesque. I am very ungrateful, for he flatters me abundantly; but unlikely I know it. I was accustomed to it enough when my father was First Minister; on his fall, I lost it all at once: and since that I have lived with Mr. Chute, who is all vehemence; with Mr. Fox, who is all disputation; with Sir Charles Williams, who has no time from flattering himself; with Gray, who does not hate to find fault with me; with Mr. Conway, who is all sincerity; and you and Mr. Rigby, who have always laughed at me in a good-natured way. I don't know how, but I think I like all this as well—I beg his pardon, Mr. [James] Raftor [brother of Kitty Clive] does flatter me; but I should be a cormorant for praise, if I could swallow it whole as he gives it me."

It is certainly worthy of mention that when Garrick retired, Kitty Clive, his old colleague at Drury Lane, who had plagued the life out of him for years, heard that it was his desire to become a Churchwarden and a Justice of the Peace, wrote to him: "I screamed at your parish business. I think

I see you in your Churchwardenship, quarrelling for not making their brown loaves big enough; but, for God's sake, never think of being a Justice of the Peace, for the people will quarrel on purpose to hear you talk, so that you may have as much business on the lawn as you had upon the boards. If I should live to be thawed, I will come to Town on purpose to kiss you; and in the summer, as you say, I hope we shall see each other ten times as often, when we will talk, and dance, and sing, and send our hearers laughing to their bed." Garrick, after his retirement, was apparently a little difficult. "This very day," Walpole wrote to Mason on September 19th, 1772, "Garrick, who had dropped me these three years, has been here, by his own request, and told Mr. Raftor how happy he was at the reconciliation. I did not know we had quarrelled, and so omitted being happy, too."

Kitty Clive herself had long before this come to little Strawberry Hill, which Walpole lent her for life. When precisely she came is not now known; probably it was about 1750, for, "Have you any Mrs. Clive who pulls down barns that intercept your prospect?" he asks Henry Seymour Conway in November, 1752. Two years later he tells Richard Bentley: "My principal employ in this part of the world, except surveying my library, which has scarce anything but the painting to finish, and planting at Mrs. Clive's, whither I remove all my superabundancies. I have lately planted the green lane that leads from her garden to the Common. 'Well,' said she, 'when it is done, what shall I call it?' 'Why,' said I, 'what would you call it but Drury Lane!'"

In Walpole's letters there are many references to the charming but wayward actress. "I had a much

more agreeable supper last night at Mrs. Clive's, with Miss West, my niece Cholmondeley, and Arthur Murphy, the writing-actor, who is very good company, and two or three more," he tells George Montagu in January, 1760. "Mrs. Cholmondeley is very lively; you know how entertaining the Clive is; and Miss West is an absolute original." He relates how he spends his time: "All the morning I play with my workmen or animals; go regularly every evening to the meadows with Mrs. Clive; wait on with my Lady Suffolk; and at night scribble my 'Painters'." In 1766 Lady Shelburne took a house at Twickenham, which circumstance produced a bon-mot from "Kitty", which Walpole, appreciative of wit in others, gladly records: "You know my Lady Suffolk is *deaf*; and I have talked much of a charming old passion, Madame du Deffand, who is *blind*. 'Well,' said the Clive, 'if the new Countess is but *lame*, I shall have no chance of ever seeing you.'"

Kitty Clive was popular at Little Strawberry Hill —Walpole christened it Clive's-den; but she was as truculent there as at Drury Lane. "I remember a reply which she made to two very decent men, there in office as surveyor of the roads in the parish, on my father's sending them to her, as being the acting magistrate of the place, to demand some payment which she had refused: it was in the laconic terms, 'By the living God, I will not pay it, Letitia Matilda Hawkins has related.' I suppose this might destroy entirely all intercourse with our house, for she was, of course, compelled to break her oath. I suppose it was to show 'what some actresses *can* do—what some *will* do', that she worked for the Holbein chamber at Strawberry Hill the carpet with blue tulips and yellow foliage." Walpole, anyhow, enjoyed

her company, and saw much of her, especially after she retired from the stage in 1769—her farewell epilogue was written by Walpole for her benefit night, April 24th—after which she took her brother, James Raftor, to live with her.

Walpole's intimacy with the actress was of long duration. So early as August, 1748, he wrote to George Montagu: "I am in the act of expecting the house of Pritchard—[Hannah Pritchard, the actress, and her son, who was Treasurer of Drury Lane Theatre]—Dame Clive, and Mrs. Metheglin to dinner, but I promise you the Clive and I will not show one another our pleasure in the banket time or afterwards. In the evening we go to a play at Kingston, where the places are twopence a head. Our great company at Richmond and Twickenham has been torn to pieces by civil dissensions, but they continue acting. Mr. Lee, the ape of Garrick, not liking his part, refused to play it, and had the confidence to go into the pit as spectator. The actress, whose benefit was in agitation, made her complaints to the audience, who obliged him to mount the stage; but since that, he is retired from the company. I am sorry he was such a coxcomb, for he was our best."

For the last years of Kitty Clive, Walpole is the principal authority. She was in her latter years usually in ill-health. "Pray tell Lord Harcourt," he wrote to Mason in August, 1782, "that poor Clive is better, yet her fits of jaundice return so often that I fear her recovery. Indeed, the apothecary fears her liver is affected—she is shrunk to an extraordinary degree." In the same month he told the Countess of Upper Ossory that "Clive's-den is little less than an infirmary"; and the Earl of Strafford that "Mrs. Clive is certainly very declining, but has been better

of late; and, which I am glad of, thinks herself better." To Earl Harcourt he wrote early in the next month: "She is so much recovered that she ventures to go out cruising on all the neighbours, and has made a miraculous draught of fishes." In October, 1782, Walpole wrote again to the same correspondent: "Mrs. Cliveden, I flatter myself is really recovered, having had no relapse since I mentioned her last. She even partakes of the diversions of the carnival, which at Twickenham begins at Michaelmas, and lasts as long as there are four persons to make a pool. I am to go to her this evening to what she calls *only two tables*. I have preached against hot rooms; but the devil, who can conceal himself in a black ace as well as in an apple or a guinea, has been too mighty for me, and so, like other divines, when I cannot root out vice, I join in it." She died at Little Strawberry Hill on December 6th, 1785, and was buried in Twickenham Churchyard. Walpole put up an urn in the shrubbery attached to her cottage, with an inscription written by himself:

"Ye smiles and jests, still hover round;
This is mirth's consecrated ground.
Here lived the laughter-loving dame,
A matchless actress, Clive her name;
The comic muse with her retired,
And shed a tear when she expired."

Of two neighbours less desirable than any hitherto mentioned, Walpole shall give his own humorous accounts.

So late as 1770, his niece, Charlotte, the illegitimate daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, and the wife of the fifth Earl of Dysart, joined the confraternity, to his great pleasure. "I went yesterday to see my niece in

her new principality of Ham. It delighted me and made me peevish," he wrote to George Montagu. "Close to the Thames, in the centre of all rich and verdant beauty, it is so blocked up and barricaded with walls, vast trees, and gates, that you think yourself an hundred miles off and an hundred years back. The old furniture is so magnificently ancient, dreary and decayed, that at every step one's spirits sink, and all my passion for antiquity could not keep them up. Every minute I expected to see ghosts sweeping by; Talmachs and Maitlands! There is an old brown gallery full of Vandykes and Lelys, charming miniatures, delightful Wouvermans, and Polenburghs, china, japan, bronzes, ivory cabinets, and silver dogs, pokers, bellows, etc., without end. One pair of bellows is of filigree. In this state of pomp and tatters my nephew intends it shall remain, and is so religious an observer of the venerable rites of his house that, because the gates never were opened by his father but once for the late Lord Granville, you are locked out and locked in; and after journeying all round the house, as you do round an old French fortified town, you are at last admitted through the stable-yard to creep along a dark passage by the housekeeper's room, and so by a back-door into the great hall. He seems as much afraid of water as a cat, for though you might enjoy the Thames from every window of three sides of the house, you may tumble into it before you would guess it is there. In short, our ancestors had so little idea of taste and beauty, that I should not have been surprised if they had hung their pictures with the painted sides to the wall. Think of such a palace commanding all the reach of Richmond and Twickenham with a domain from the foot of Richmond Hill to Kingston Bridge,

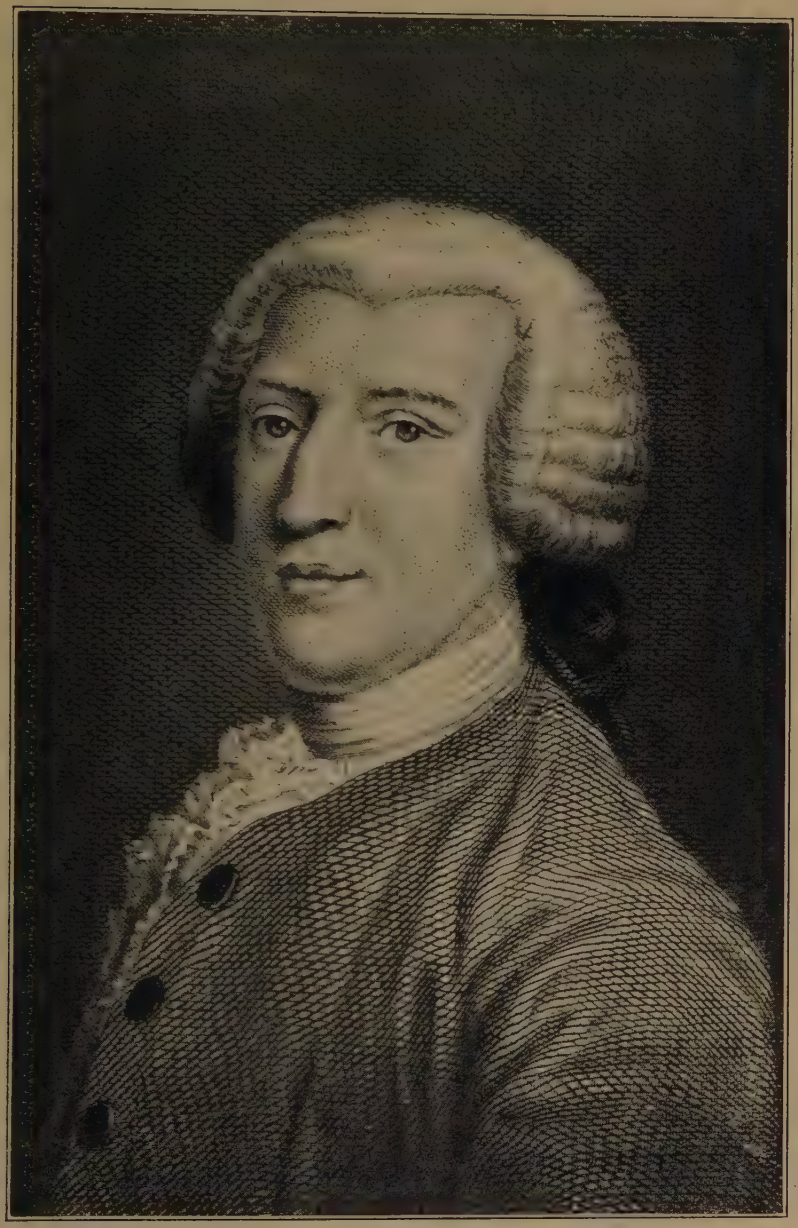
and then imagine its being as dismal and prospectless as if it stood

On Stanmore's wintry wild!

I don't see why a man should not be divorced from his prospect as well as from his wife, for not being able to enjoy it. Lady Dysart frets, but it is not the etiquette of the family to yield, and so she must content herself with her château of Tondertentronk as well as she can. She had another such ample prison in Suffolk, and may be glad to reside where she is. Strawberry, with all its painted glass and gloomth, looked as gay when I came home as Mrs. Cornelis's ball-room."

"Since I came home I have been disturbed with a strange, foolish woman, that lives at the great corner house yonder; she is an attorney's wife, and much given to her bottle," he wrote to George Montagu in 1748. "By the time she has finished that and daylight, she grows afraid of thieves, and makes the servants fire minute-guns out of the garret windows. I remember persuading Mrs. Kerwood that there was a great smell of thieves, and this drunken dame seems literally to smell it. The divine, Ashton, who I suppose you will have seen when you receive this, will give you an account of the astonishment we were in last night at hearing guns; I began to think that the Duke had brought some of his defeats from Flanders."

"At the neighbouring village of Teddington lives a Captain Prescott, who is not only a tar, but pitch and brimstone, too," he wrote to the Countess of Upper Ossory in 1783. "Two or three years ago (he is near fifty) he married a beautiful, sensible young daughter of the minister of Portsmouth, who



SIR HORACE MANN, BART.
After Astley.

gave her £2,500. Trinculo soon used her inhumanly, beat her, had a child by her, thrashed her again; she was again three months gone with child, and then he beat her so unmercifully, that a young footman, who had lived five years with him, could not bear to be witness to so much brutality, left him, and has since lived a year with Mrs. Clive, who finds him the best servant she ever had. Poor Mrs. Trinculo's sufferings continuing, she resolved to run away, and by the footman's assistance did, and got to London. Her father and friends came up, and made her swear the peace against her husband. The cause was heard before Lord Mansfield. Mrs. Clive's servant was summoned as a witness. The Chief Justice asked him if he had not been aiding and abetting to his former mistress's escape. He said, Yes, he had. 'You had!' said my Lord. 'What! do you confess that you helped your master's wife to elope?' 'Yes, my Lord,' replied the lad, 'and yet my master has never thanked me!' 'Thanked you!' said Lord Mansfield, 'for being an accomplice with a wife against her husband?' 'My Lord,' said the lad, 'if I had not, he would have murdered her, and then he would have been hanged.' The court laughed, Lord Mansfield was charmed with the lad's coolness and wit, and if your Ladyship is not, I hope you will never hear anything better than M. de Coulanges's poetry."

Chapter VII

PARIS AND MADAME DU DEFFAND

WALPOLE was a very busy man in the fifties and sixties of the eighteenth century, what with Strawberry Hill and its collections, his printing-press, his Parliamentary duties, and the general round of social life, to which last he was by no means so averse as he wished it to appear. "I am very much in your debt," he wrote from Arlington Street to Sir David Dalrymple in February, 1764, "but have had but too much excuse for being so. Men who go to bed at six and seven in the morning, and who rise but to return to the same fatigue, have little leisure for other most necessary duties. The severe attendance we have had lately in the House of Commons cannot be unknown to you, and will already, I trust, have pleaded my pardon." Again, in the following month, he is explaining to the Earl of Hertford that he had had so busy a week that he had not had a minute's time to acquaint him of Lord Hardwicke's death. "I had so many auctions, dinners, loo-parties, so many sick acquaintances, with the addition of a long day in the House of Commons (which, by the way, I quitted for a sale of books), and a ball, that I left the common newspapers to inform you of an event which two months ago would have been of much consequence."

The following letters show that there was no exaggeration in Walpole's complaints that he had

not a minute to himself, though how, in the midst of his many occupations, he found time for correspondence, especially during an exciting Session, it is difficult to explain.

To the Earl of Hertford, Arlington Street, February 15th, 1764. "You ought to be witness to the fatigue I am suffering, before you can estimate the merit I have in being writing to you at this moment. Cast up eleven hours in the House of Commons on Monday, and above seventeen hours yesterday—ay, seventeen at length—and then you will guess if I am tired! nay, you must add seventeen hours that I may possibly be there on Friday, and then calculate if I am weary. In short, yesterday was the longest day ever known in the House of Commons—why, on the Westminster election at the end of my father's reign [January, 1742], I was at home by six. On Alexander Murray's affair, I believe, by five—on the militia, twenty people, I think, sat till six, but then there were only among themselves, no heat, no noise, no roaring. It was half an hour after seven this morning before I was at home. Think of that, and brag of your French Parliaments."

To the Earl of Hertford, Arlington Street, February 15th, 1764. "We sat all Monday hearing evidence against Mr. Wood, that dirty wretch Webb, and the messengers, for their illegal proceedings against Mr. Wilkes. At midnight, Mr. Grenville offered us to adjourn or proceed. Mr. Pitt humbly begged not to eat or sleep till so great a point should be decided. On a division, in which though many said *ay* to adjourning, nobody would go out for fear of losing their seats, it was carried by 379 to 31 for proceeding —and then, half the House went away. The Ministers representing the indecency of this, and

Fitzherbert saying that many were within call, Stanley observed that, after voting against adjournment, a third part had adjourned themselves, when, instead of being within *call*, they ought to have been within *hearing*: this was unanswerable, and we adjourned.

"Yesterday we fell to again. It was one in the morning before the evidence was closed. Carrington, the messenger, was alone examined for seven hours. This old man, the cleverest of all Ministerial terriers, was pleased with recounting his achievements, yet perfectly guarded and betraying nothing. However, the *arcana imperii* have been wofully laid open.

"I have heard Garrick, and other players, give themselves airs of fatigue after a long part—think of the Speaker, nay think of the clerks taking most correct minutes for sixteen hours, and reading them over to every witness, and then let me hear of fatigue! Do you know, not only my Lord Temple—who you may swear never budged as spectator—but old Will Chetwynd, now past eighty, and who had walked to the House, did not stir a single moment out of his place, from three in the afternoon till the division at seven in the morning. Nay, we had *Patriotesses*, too, who stayed out the whole: Lady Rockingham and Lady Sondes the first day, both again the second day, with Miss Mary Pelham, Mrs. Fitzroy, and the Duchess of Richmond, as patriot, as any of us. Lady Mary Coke, George Pitt, and Lady Pembroke, came after the Opera, but I think did not stay above seven or eight hours at most."

To the Earl of Hertford, Arlington Street, February 19th, 1764. "We may, and probably shall, fall off! this was our strongest question—but our troops will

stand fast; their hopes and views depend upon it, and their spirits are raised. But for the other side it will not be the same. The lookers-out will be strayers away, and their very subsidies will undo them. They bought two single votes that day with two peerages: Sir R. Bampfylde and Sir Charles Tynte—and so are going to light up the flame of two more county elections—and that in the west, surely nothing was wanting but a tinder-box!

"You would have almost laughed to see the spectres produced by both sides; one would have thought that they had sent a search-warrant for Members of Parliament into every hospital. Votes were brought down in flannels and blankets, till the floor of the House looked like the pool of Bethseda. 'Tis wonderful that half of us are not dead—I should not say *us*, herculean *I* have not suffered the least, except that, from being a Hercules of ten grains, I don't believe I now weigh above eight. I felt from nothing so much as the noise, which made me as drunk as an owl—you may imagine the clamours of two parties so nearly matched, and so impatient to come to a decision."

To Sir Horace Mann, Arlington Street, February 20th, 1764. "The seeds of opposition were sown a long time before they produced any fruit, but a violent crop had shot up this week. I don't know, my dear Sir, whether you are not too much a foreigner to comprehend what I am going to tell you. Does it not sound strange to your Tuscan ears that a Member of Parliament, after being expelled the House and fled from his country, should have his complaint tried against the Secretary's office for breach of his privilege? Learn to adore *Liberty*, when it defends the rights of a man after he has

forfeited them !—and don't despise the constitutions of your countrymen, who have endured such fatigue for a week or so as will give your Italian nerves the headache but to hear of.

"On Monday we sat past midnight hearing evidence on the seizure of Wilkes's papers. The next day we proceeded, closed the evidence at one in the morning, and then went—not to bed, but into a debate. The Opposition moved to vote the seizure of papers by warrants not specifying names to be illegal. The Ministers insisted that we should first clear the accused, as having acted according to the forms of office. A quarter after four we divided, when to the utter confusion of the Court, they proved but 207 ; we 197. Here your Florentine arithmetic may again be at fault, and not tell you that a majority of *but ten* is a defeat ; for you must reckon into the minority popularity, the hopes of the interested, and their fears, and twenty circumstances that contribute to drown a sinking Administration. To give them their due, they dispute the ground inch by inch. We again fell to debating, divided again, 208 and 184 ; and in short sat till a quarter after seven in the morning. On Friday we went on the great question itself, which held us from three in the afternoon till half an hour after five the next morning. We are again beaten ; but how beaten ? by 232 against 218, a minority increasing as it is defeated.

"Do not you wonder that I am alive ? that I am writing to you ? Was ever such a week ? Never. Was there ever so late a day as Tuesday ? Never. Go and look over the Fasti in your Capitol, you will find nothing like this. If we have not out-conquered the Romans, we have out-talked them—I mean in length of time ; I cannot say our eloquence had

been equal to our perseverance. There was some spirit towards morning on Tuesday; very little indeed on Friday that was not absolute dullness; yet Mr. Pitt commanded, but so oppressed with gout, and so exhausted that, though he spoke above an hour, at four in the morning, it was as languid as if he had been paid for it. In truth, his enemies were not formidable. We had the five best speakers in the House,—him, Charles Townshend, Mr. Conway, Charles Yorke, and Lord George Sackville, who has *deserted* from the Court.

"The world, you may conclude, waits in anxious suspense for the subsequent operations of the campaign. The Ministers must try if by *weight of metal* they can maintain their ground. For my part, I am satisfied. I did not believe that there were 197 men who had spirit and virtue enough to resist all temptations, when their liberties were at stake. Since there are so many, it is enough to ward off any danger from such bunglers as the present Ministers, the badness of whose characters, assisted by no better parts, is an antidote to their own poison. Their best champion has parts and shrewdness, but is so impudently profligate that even absolute power in the Crown, which he is so ready to promote, could not protect him long. Thus hero of brass is the Attorney-General Norton, who is qualified to draw up impious manifestoes for a Czarina!"

Walpole, who had not been abroad since he made the Grand Tour in 1739, now had it in mind to revisit Paris, where his cousin, Lord Hertford, was British Ambassador. "I must begin with what you conclude—your most friendly offer, if I should be distressed by the Treasury," he wrote to him in the

autumn of 1764. "I can never thank you enough for this, nor the tender manner in which you clothe it; though, believe me, my dear Lord, I could never blush to be obliged to you. In truth, though I do not doubt their disposition to hurt me, I have had prudence enough to make it much longer than their reign can last, before it could be in their power to make me feel want. With all my extravagance, I am much beforehand, and having perfected and paid for what I wished to do here, my common expenses are trifling, and nobody can live more frugally than I, when I have a mind to it. What I said of fearing temptations at Paris was barely serious: I thought it imprudent, just now, to throw away my money; but that consideration, singly, would not keep me here. I am eager to be with you, and my chief reason for delaying is, that I wish to make a longer stay than I could just now."

Walpole continued to play with the idea of going abroad again for a period. He kept on postponing the journey. In November he tells Lord Hertford that he will set out in the following February. "After postponing it for seven idle months, you will stare at my thinking of it, just after the meeting of the Parliament. Why, that is just one of my principal reasons. I will stay and see the opening, and one or two divisions; the minority will be able to be the majority, or they will not: if they can, they will not want me, who want nothing of them: if they cannot, I am sure I can do them no good, and shall take my leave of them;—I mean always, to be sure, if things do not turn on a few votes: they shall not call me a deserter. In every other case, I am so sick of politics, which I have long detested, that I must bid adieu to them." He tells everybody

he is going to cross the Channel, as if it were an unprecedented event.

Actually, with some trepidation, he made up his mind. "Well," he wrote to Mann on August 27th, 1765, "after twenty-three years of designs and irresolutions, I am actually leaving England! You will ask kindly whether almost every foreign thought in those years did not point beyond Paris? Oh, yes,—but alas! think how ill I have been; not to mention that I am older, too, by twenty-three years. That space has made Alps and Apennines grow twenty times taller and more wrinkled and horrid! Oh, but you will say, you may come by sea—worse and worse—a sea voyage after the gout in one's head and stomach! I will tell you what; there is a man who has just invented what he calls *a marine belt*; you buckle it on, and walk upon the sea as you would upon a grass-plot. I never was an excellent walker, and my feet at present are piteously tender—but I think a wave cannot hurt one—perhaps I may step to you from Marseilles to Leghorn. This discovery, to be sure, has given an ugly shock to one of our best miracles—but I give it up with Christian patience, being convinced that the art of flying will be next reduced to practice; oh, I shall certainly make you a visit on the first pair of wings that are to be sold."

Walpole made a tremendous to-do about going to Paris: he could scarcely have made more fuss if he had been adventuring to Timbuctoo. The journey, even then, was not a terrible affair; and, after all, the traveller was only forty-eight. The real trouble was that Walpole had got into a groove, and his horizon was bounded by Arlington Street and Strawberry Hill. "I shall set out on Monday se'n-

night, and force myself to believe that I am glad to go—and yet this will be my chief joy, for I promise myself little pleasure in arriving," he moaned to George Montagu on August 31st, 1765. "Can you think me boy enough to be fond of a new world at my time of life? If I did not hate the world I know, I should not seek another. My greatest amusement will be in reviving old ideas. The memory of what made impressions on one's youth is ten times dearer than any new pleasure can be. I shall probably write to you often, for I am not disposed to communicate myself to anything that I have not known these thirty years. My mind is much a compound from the vast variety that I have seen, acted, pursued, that it would cost me too much pains to be intelligible to young persons, if I had a mind to open myself to them. They certainly do not desire I should. You like my gossipping *to* you, though you seldom gossip *with* me. The trifles that amuse my mind are the only points I value now. I have seen the vanity of everything serious, and the falsehood of everything that pretended to be serious: I go to see French plays and buy French china, not to know their Ministers, to look into their Government, or think of the interests of nations—in short, unlike most people that are growing old, I am convinced that nothing is charming but what appeared important in one's youth, which afterwards passes for follies. Oh, but those follies are sincere—if the pursuits of age are so, they are sincere alone to self-interest. Thus I think, and have no other care but not to think aloud. I would not have respectable youth think me an old fool. For the old knaves, they may suppose me one of their number if they please; I shall not be so—but neither the one nor

the other shall know what I am. I have done with them all, shall amuse myself as well as I can, and think as little as I can; a pretty hard task for an active mind."

Walpole departed in a very sour frame of mind —so sour, indeed, that it is a wonder he went at all, especially since there was not the slightest reason he should do so if he did not want to. Perhaps it is that he did protest too much. He did bring himself to admit that he looked forward to meeting "four or five very agreeable and sensible people—the Guerchys, Madame de Mirepoix, Madame de Boufflers, Lady Mary Chabot, and the Duc de Nivernois, whose acquaintance he had made in England. He found some comfort in the fact that the Duke and Duchess of Richmond would follow him in two or three weeks. "Their house will be a sort of home," he told George Montagu. Then pessimism again took him for its own: "I actually go into it at first, till I can suit myself with an apartment; but I shall take care to quit it before they come, for though they are in a manner my children, I do not intend to adopt the rest of my countrymen, nor when I quit the best company here, to live in the worst there; such are young travelling boys, and, what is still worse, old travelling boys, governors." Walpole was, indeed, homesick before he left home. When he heard that William Cole was also going to Paris, he almost implored him to hasten his departure, and to stay as long as he could.

Walpole arrived at Amiens on September 21st, in almost a cheerful frame of mind—he having "escaped the Prince of Nassau at Dover, and sea-sickness at sea, though the voyage lasted seven hours and a half." There he met Lady Mary Coke,

and that cheered him. The next day he was at Paris. His cousin, the Earl (afterwards Marquis) of Hertford, was the British Ambassador, and his Excellency at once took him in hand. "My Lady Hertford has cut me to pieces, and thrown me into a caldron with tailors, periwig-makers, snuff-box-wrights, milliners, etc., which really took up but a little time; and I am come out quite new, with everything but youth," he told Lady Hervey. "The journey recovered me with magic expedition. My strength, if mine could ever be called strength, is returned; and the gout going off in a minuet step. I will say nothing of my spirits, which are indecently juvenile, and not less improper for my age than for the country where I am; which, if you will give me leave to say it, has a thought too much gravity. I don't venture to laugh or talk nonsense, but in English."

It really was not so bad after all, Walpole found when he began to accommodate himself to French customs. "Nay, though all my hours are turned topsy-turvy, I find no inconvenience, but dine at half an hour after two, and sup at ten, as easily as I did in England at my usual hours," he wrote to Lady Suffolk. "Indeed, breakfast and dinner now and then jostle one another, but I have found an excellent preservative against sitting up late, which is by not playing at whisk. They constantly tap a rubber before supper, get up in the middle of a game, finish it after a meal of three courses and a dessert, add another rubber to it, then take their knotting bags, draw together into a little circle, and start some topic of literature or *ir*religion, and chat till it is time to go to bed—that is, till you would think it time to get up again. The women are very

good-humoured and easy; most of the men disagreeable enough. However, as everything English is in fashion, our bad French is accepted into the bargain. Mr. Hume is fashion itself, although his French is almost as unintelligible as his English; Mr. Stanley is extremely liked; and if liking them, good humour and spirits can make anybody please, Mr. Elliot will not fail. For my own part, I receive the greatest civilities, and in general am much amused; but I could wish there was less whisk, and somewhat more cleanliness." He added: "You see, Madam, it will take some time to make me a perfect Frenchman. Upon the whole I am very well amused, which is all I seek besides my health. I am a little too old to be inquiring into their government or politics, not being come hither to finish my studies, but to forget them. One may always take one's choice here; old folks may be as young as they please, and the young as wise as they will. The former not only suits my age better, but my inclination, though the *bon ton* here is to be grave and learned."

What particularly irked Walpole was that his French was not adequate to the strain he would have put upon it—this really caused him much distress. His vanity was injured. "I have been with Madame Geoffrin several times, and think she has one of the best understandings I ever met, and more knowledge of the world. I may be charmed with the French, but your Ladyship must not expect that they will fall love with me," he said to Lady Hervey. "Without affecting to lower myself, the disadvantage of speaking a language worse than any idiot one meets is insurmountable: the silliest Frenchman is eloquent to me, and leaves me embarrassed and obscure. I

could name twenty other reasons, if this one was nor sufficient. As it is, my own defects are the sole cause of my not liking Paris entirely: the constraint I am under from not being perfectly master of their language, and from being so much in the dark, as one necessarily must be, on half the subjects of their conversation, prevents my enjoying that ease for which their society is calculated. I am much amused, but not comfortable."

Of course, Walpole made his bow to Majesty: "I went through all my presentations at Versailles. 'Tis very convenient to gobble up a whole royal family in an hour's time, instead of being sacrificed one week at Leicester House, another in Grosvenor Street, a third in Cavendish Square, etc., etc., etc." He wrote a most amusing account of this to Chute. "You perceive that I have been presented," he told him. "The Queen took great notice of me [for which reason he informed Lady Hervey that she is *le plus grand roi du monde*]; none of the rest said a syllable. You are let into the King's bedchamber just as he has put on his shirt; he dresses and talks good-humouredly to a few, glares at strangers, goes to Mass, to dinner, and a-hunting. The good old Queen, who is like Lady Primrose in the face, and Queen Caroline in the immensity of her cap, is at her dressing-table, attended by two or three old ladies. Thence you go to the Dauphin, for all is done in an hour. He scarce stays a minute; indeed, poor creature, he is a ghost, and cannot possibly last three months. The Dauphiness is in her bedchamber, but dressed and standing; looks cross, is not civil, and has the true Westphalian grace and accents. The four Mesdames, who are clumsy, plump old wretches, with a bad likeness to their father, stand in a bedchamber

in a row, with black cloaks and knotting-bags, looking good-humoured and not knowing what to say. The ceremony is very short; then you are carried to the Dauphin's three boys, whom you may be sure only bow and stare. The Duke of Berri [afterwards Louis XVI] looks weak and weak-eyed; the Count de Provence [Louis XVIII] is a fine boy; the Count d'Artois [Charles X] well enough. The whole concludes with seeing the Dauphin's little girl, who is as round and as fat as a pudding."

Walpole set down his impressions of Paris and many notable Parisians in writing on January 25th, 1766, to Thomas Gray, and, long as is the letter, no excuse is necessary for printing it here, since no paraphrase would do it justice:

"I am much indebted to you for your kind letter and advice; and though it is late to thank you for it, it is at least a stronger proof that I do not forget it. However, I am a little obstinate, as you know, on the chapter of health, and have persisted through this Siberian winter in not adding a grain to my clothes, and in going open-breasted without an under waistcoat. In short, though I like extremely to live, it must be in my own way, as long as I can: it is not youth I court, but liberty, and I think making oneself tender is issuing a *general warrant* against one's own person. I suppose I shall submit to confinement when I cannot help it; but I am indifferent enough to life not to care if it ends soon after my prison begins.

"I have not delayed so long to answer your letter, from not thinking of it, or from want of matter, but from want of time. I am constantly occupied, engaged, amused, till I cannot bring a hundredth part of what I have to say into the compass of a letter. You will lose

nothing by this: you know my volubility, when I am full of new subjects; and I have at least many hours of conversation for you at my return. One does not learn a whole nation in four or five months; but, for the time few, I believe, I have seen, studied, or got so much acquainted with the French as I have.

"By what I said of their religion or rather irreligious opinions, you must not conclude their people of quality atheists—at least, not the men. Happily for them, poor souls! they are not capable of going so far into thinking. They assent to a great deal, because it is the fashion, and because they don't know how to contradict. They are ashamed to defend the Roman Catholic religion, because it is quite exploded; but I am convinced they believe it in their hearts. They hate the Parliaments and the philosophers, and are rejoiced that they may still idolise royalty. At present, too, they are a little triumphant; the Court has shown a little spirit, and the Parliaments much less: but as the Duc de Choiseul, who is very fluttering, unsettled, and inclined to the philosophers, has made a compromise with the Parliament of Bretagne, the Parliaments might venture out again, if, as I fancy will be the case, they are not glad to drop a cause of which they began to be a little weary of the inconveniences.

"The generality of the men, and more than the generality, are dull and empty. They have taken up gravity, thinking it was philosophy and English, and so have acquired nothing in the room of their natural levity and cheerfulness. However, as their high opinion of their own country remains, for which they can no longer assign any reason, they are contemptuous and reserved, instead of being ridicu-

lously, consequently pardonably, impertinent. I have wondered, knowing my own countrymen, that we had attained such a superiority. I wonder no longer, and little more respect for English *heads* than I had.

"The women do not seem of the same country: if they are less gay than they were, they are more informed, enough to make them very conversable. I know six or seven with very superior understandings; some of them with wit, or with softness, or very good sense.

"Madame Geoffrin, of whom you have heard much, is an extraordinary woman, with more common sense than I almost ever met. Great quickness in discovering characters, penetration in going to the bottom of them, and a pencil that never fails in a likeness—seldom a favourable one. She exacts and preserves, spite of her birth and their nonsensical prejudices about nobility, great court and attention. This she acquires by a thousand little arts and offices of friendship: and by a freedom and severity which seem to be her sole end of drawing a concourse to her; for she insists on scolding those she inveigles to her. She has little taste and less knowledge, but protects artisans and authors, and courts a few people to have the credit of serving her dependants. She was bred under the famous Madame Tençin, who advised her never to refuse any man; for, said her mistress, though nine in ten should not care a farthing for you, the tenth may live to be an useful friend. She did not adopt or reject the whole plan, but fully retained the purport of the maxim. In short, she is an epitome of empire, subsisting by rewards and punishments.

"Her great enemy, Madame du Deffand, was for a short time mistress of the Regent, is now

old and stone-blind, but retains all her vivacity, wit, memory, judgement, passions, and agreeableness. She goes to operas, plays, suppers, and Versailles, gives suppers twice a week; has everything new read to her; makes new songs and epigrams, ay, admirably, and remembers every one that has been made these fourscore years. She corresponds with Voltaire, dictates charming letters to him, contradicts him, is no bigot to him or anybody, and laughs both at the clergy and the philosophers. In a dispute, into which she easily falls, she is very warm, and yet scarce ever in the wrong: her judgement on every subject is as just as possible; on every point of conduct as wrong as possible; for she is all love and hatred, passionate for her friends to enthusiasm, still anxious to be loved, I don't mean by lovers, and a vehement enemy, but openly. As she can have no amusement but conversation, the least solitude and *ennui* are insupportable to her, and put her into the power of several worthless people, who eat her suppers when they can't nobody's of higher rank; wink to one another and laugh at her; hate her because she has forty times more parts—and venture to hate her because she is not rich. She had an old friend whom I must mention, a Monsieur Pontdeveyle, author of the *Fat Puni*, and the *Complaisant*, and of those pretty novels, the *Comte de Comminge*, the *Siege of Calais*, and *Les Malheurs de l'Amour*. Would not you expect this old man to be very agreeable? He can be so, but seldom is: yet he has another very different and very amusing talent, the art of parody, and is unique in his kind. He composes tales to the tunes of long dances: for instance, he has adapted the Regent's *Daphnis and Chloe* to one, and made it ten times more indecent; but is so old, and sings

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After Carmontelle.

it so well, that it is permitted in all companies. He has succeeded still better in *les caractères de la danse* —to which he had adapted words that express all the characters of love. With all this he had not the least idea of cheerfulness in conversation; seldom speaks but on grave subjects, and not often on them; is a humorist, very supercilious, and wrapt up in admiration of his own country, as the only judge of his merit. His air and look are cold and forbidding; but ask him to sing, or praise his works, his eyes and smiles open and brighten up. In short, I can show him you: the self-applauding poet in Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress', the second print is so like his very features and very wig, that you would know him by it, if you came hither—for he certainly will not go to you.

"Madame de Mirepoix's understanding is excellent of the useful kind, and can be so when she pleases of the agreeable kind. She has read, but seldom shows it, and has perfect taste. Her manner is cold, but very civil; and she conceals even the blood of Lorraine, without ever forgetting it. Nobody in France knows the world better, and nobody is personally so well with the King. She is false, artful, and insinuating beyond measure, when it is her interest, but indolent and a coward. She never had any passion but gaming, and always loses. For ever paying court, the sole produce of a life of art is to get money from the King to carry on a course of paying debts or contracting new ones, which she discharges as fast as she is able. She advertised devotion to get made *Dame du Palais* to the Queen; and the very next day this Princess of Lorraine was seen riding backwards with Madame Pompadour in the latter's coach. When the King was stabbed,

and heartily frightened, the mistress took a panic, too, and consulted D'Argenson, whether she had not best make off in time. He hated her, and said, By all means. Madame de Mirepoix advised her to stay. The King recovered his spirits, D'Argenson was banished, and la Maréchale inherited part of the mistress's credit.—I must interrupt my history of illustrious women with an anecdote of Monsieur de Maurepas, with whom I am much acquainted, and who has one of the few heads which approach to good ones, and who luckily for us was disgraced, and the marine dropped, because it was his favourite object and province. He employed Pontdeveyle to make a song on the Pompadour: it was clever and bitter, and did not spare even Majesty. This was Maurepas absurd enough to sing at supper at Versailles. Banishment ensued; and lest he should ever be restored the mistress persuaded the King that he had poisoned her predecessor, Madame de Châteauroux. Maurepas is very agreeable, and exceedingly cheerful; yet I have seen a transient silent cloud when politics are talked of.

"Madame de Boufflers, who was in England, is a *savante*, mistress of the Prince de Condé, and very desirous of being his wife. She is two women, the upper and the lower. I need not tell you that the lower is gallant, and still has pretensions. The upper is very sensible, too, and has a measured eloquence that is just and pleasing—but all is spoiled by an unrelaxed attention to applause. You would think she was always sitting for her picture to her biographer.

"Madame de Rochfort is different from all the rest. Her understanding is just and delicate; with a finesses of wit that is the result of reflection. Her

manner is soft and feminine, and though a *savante*, without any declared pretensions. She is the *decent* friend of Monsieur Nivernois; for you must not believe a syllable of what you read in their novels. It requires the greatest curiosity, or the greatest habitude, to discover the smallest connection between the sexes here. No familiarity, but under the veil of friendship, is permitted, and Love's dictionary is as much prohibited, as at first sight one should think his ritual was. All you hear, and that pronounced with nonchalance, is, that *Monsieur un tel* has had *Madame une telle*.

"The Duc de Nivernois has parts, and writes at the top of the mediocre, but as Madame Geoffrin says, is *manqué partout; guerrier manqué, ambassadeur manqué, homme d'affaires manqué*, and *auteur manqué* —no, he is not *homme de naissance manqué*. He would think freely, but has some ambition of being Governor to the Dauphin, and is more afraid of his wife and daughter, who are ecclesiastical *fagots*. The former out-chatters the Duke of Newcastle; and the latter, Madame de Gisors, exhausts Mr. Pitt's eloquence in defence of the Archbishop of Paris. Monsieur de Nivernois lives in a small circle of dependent admirers, and Madame de Rochfort is high-priestess for a small salary of credit.

"The Duchess of Choiseul, the only young one of these heroines, is not very pretty, but has fine eyes, and is a little model in waxwork, which not being allowed to speak for sometime is incapable, has a hesitation and modesty, the latter of which the Court has not cured, and the former of which is atoned for by the most interesting sound of voice, and forgotten in the most elegant turn and propriety of expression. Oh, it is the gentlest, amiable, civil little

creature that ever came out of a fairy egg! so just in its phrases and thoughts, so attentive and good-natured! Everybody loves it but its husband, who prefers his own sister, the Duchess de Grammont, an Amazonian, fierce, haughty dame, who loves and hates arbitrarily, and is detested. Madame de Choiseul, passionately fond of her husband, was the martyr of this union, but at last submitted with a good grace; has gained a little credit with him, and is still believed to idolise him. But I doubt it—she takes too much pains to profess it.

"I cannot finish my list without adding a much more common character—but more complete in its kind than any of the foregoing—the Maréchale de Luxembourg. She has been very handsome, very abandoned, and very mischievous. Her beauty is gone, her lovers are gone, and she thinks the devil is coming. This dejection has softened her into being rather agreeable, for she has wit and good breeding; but you would swear, by the restlessness of her person and the horrors she cannot conceal, that she had signed the compact, and expected to be called upon in a week for the performance."

Unquestionably the most interesting incident during Walpole's stay in Paris was his meeting—it might almost be called the historic meeting—with Marie de Vichy Chamroud, since 1718 Marquise du Deffand, who left her husband in 1728, when she was about thirty-five. A woman of great attraction and brilliance, she gave herself up to a life of levity. Her name has been coupled with many men, including the Regent; and when nearly seventy, she, as Walpole puts it, was, from force of habit, still continuing a "decent friendship" with President Hénault. At first Walpole was not impressed, and

described her unkindly to his correspondents. Her charm and her parts, however, gradually conquered him.

Madame du Deffand's attachment to Walpole grew into infatuation, and she became so affectionate that he was in fear that her devotion might make him appear ridiculous. However, he decided to take his chance of that, for he liked her immensely. "In return for your kind line by Mr. Beauclerk I send you a whole letter, but I was in your debt before, for making over Madame du Deffand to me, who is delicious ; that is, as often as I can get her fifty years back ; but she is as eager about what happens every day as I am about the last century," he wrote to George Augustus Selwyn. "I sup there twice a week, and bear all her dull company for the sake of the Regent. I might go there much oftener, but my curiosity to see everybody is insatiable, especially having lost so much time by my confinement."

Madame du Deffand wrote to him regularly, dictating her letters to her secretary, Wiart ; and he, for his part, conscientiously replied. He went to Paris more than once, the main object being to see her. She survived until 1780, when she died in her eighty-fifth year. In her will she left him her books and manuscripts, and confided to his care her dog. "Tonton is perfectly well, and does not like anyone once in a month," he wrote to Thomas Walpole presently. "I imitate George Selwyn about Mimy, and do not try to convert him, but let him to go Mass every Sunday. Perhaps that may not be a great merit in France. Perhaps it is a greater merit here." Eight hundred of her letters were sold in the Strawberry Hill sale of 1842, a selection of these having been published by Mary Berry thirty-two years earlier. Walpole prevailed upon her to return his letters—

possibly because he feared publication, since he was dissatisfied with his powers of expression in a foreign tongue. Seven of these letters are extant, and have been printed by Mrs. Paget Toynbee in her edition of his correspondence.

Walpole went again to Paris in August, 1769, and, of course, his first visit was to Madame du Deffand. "My dear old woman is in better health than when I left her, and her spirits so increased, that I tell her she will go mad with age," he told John Chute. "When they ask her how old she is, she answers, '*J'ai soixante et mille ans.*' She and I went to the Boulevard last night after supper, and drove about there till two in the morning. We are going to sup in the country this evening, and are to go to-morrow night at eleven to the puppet-show. A protégé of hers has written a piece for that theatre." He also wrote of her, and at greater length, to George Montagu. "My dear old friend was charmed with your mention of her, and made me vow to return a thousand compliments. She cannot conceive why you will not set hither. Feeling in herself no difference between the spirits of twenty-three and seventy-three, she thinks there is no impediment to doing whatever one will but the want of eyesight. If she had that, I am persuaded no consideration would prevent her making me a visit at Strawberry Hill. She makes songs, sings them, remembers all that ever were made; and, having lived from the most agreeable to the most reasoning age, has all that was amiable in the last, all that is sensible in this, without the vanity of the former, or the pedant impertinence of the latter. I have heard her dispute with all sorts of people, on all sorts of subjects, and never knew her in the wrong. She humbles the learned, sets right their disciples,

and finds conversation for everybody. Affectionate as Madame de Sévigné, she has none of her prejudices, but a more universal taste; and, with the most delicate frame, her spirits hurry her through a life of fatigue that would kill me, if I were to continue here. If we return by one in the morning from suppers in the country, she proposes driving to the Boulevard or to the Foire St. Ovide, because it is too early to go to bed. I had great difficulty last night to persuade her, though she was not well, not to sit up till between two or three for the comet; for which purpose she had appointed an astronomer to bring his telescopes to the President Hénault's, as she thought it would amuse me. In short, her goodness to me is so excessive, that I feel unashamed at producing my withered person in a round of diversions, which I have quitted at home. I tell a story; I do feel ashamed, and sigh to be in my quiet castle and cottage; but it costs me many a pang, when I reflect that I shall probably never have resolution enough to take another journey to see this best and sincerest of friends, who loves me as much as my mother did! but it is idle to look forward—what is next year?—a bubble that may burst for her or me, before even the flying year can hurry to the end of its almanack!"

Walpole, of course, found many friends at Paris, and with a party of them—his niece, Mrs. Cholmondeley; Mrs. [Jane] Hart, Lady Denbigh's sister; and the Count de Grave—went to Versailles. His account of this visit, sent to George Montagu, is an admirable example of his descriptive powers:

"Our first object was to see Madame du Barri. Being too early for Mass, we saw the Dauphin and his brothers at dinner. The eldest is the picture of

the Duke of Grafton, except that he is more fair, and will be taller. He has a sickly air, and no grace. The Count de Provence has a very pleasing countenance, with an air of more sense than the Count d'Artois, the genius of the family. They already tell as many *bons mots* of the latter as of Henri Quatre and Louis Quartorze. He is very fat, and the most like his grandfather of all the children. You may imagine this royal mess did not occupy us long. Thence to the chapel, where a first row in the balconies was kept for us. Madame du Barri arrived over against us below, without rouge, without powder, indeed *sans avoir fait sa toilette* ; an odd appearance, as she was so conspicuous close to the altar, and amidst both Court and people. She is pretty, when you consider her ; yet so little striking, that I never should have asked who she was. There is nothing bold, assuming, or affected in her manner. Her husband's sister was along with her. In the tribune above, surrounded by prelates, was the amorous and still handsome King. One could not help smiling at the mixture of piety, pomp, and carnality. From chapel we went to the dinner of the elder Mesdames. We were almost stifled in the ante-chamber, where their dishes were heating over charcoal, and where we could not stir for the press. When the doors are opened, everybody rushes in, Princes of the blood, *cordons bleus*, abbés, housemaids, and Lord knows who and what. Yet, so used are their Highnesses to this trade, that they eat as comfortably and heartily as you or I could do in our own parlours.

"Our second act was much more agreeable. We quitted the Court and a reigning mistress, for a dead one and a cloister. In short, I had obtained leave from the Bishop of Chartres to enter *into* St. Cyr,

and, as Madame du Deffand never leaves anything undone that can give me satisfaction, she had written to the Abbess to desire I might see everything that could be seen there. The Bishop's order was to admit me, Monsieur de Grave, *et les dames de ma compagnie.* I begged the Abbess to give me back the order, that I might deposit it in the archives of Strawberry, and she complied instantly. Every door flew open to us: and the nuns vied in attentions to please us. The first thing I desired to see was Madame de Maintenon's apartment. It consists of two small rooms, a library, and a very small chamber, the same in which the Czar saw her, and in which she died. The bed is taken away, and the room covered now with bad pictures of the royal family, which destroys the gravity and simplicity. It is wainscoted with oak, with plain chairs of the same, covered with dark blue damask. Everywhere else, the chairs are of blue cloth. The simplicity and extreme neatness of the whole house, which is vast, are very remarkable. A large apartment above (for that I have mentioned is on the ground floor), consisting of five rooms, and destined by Louis Quatorze for Madame de Maintenon, is now the infirmary, with neat white linen beds, and decorated with every text of Scripture by which could be insinuated that the foundress was a Queen. The hour of vespers being come, we were conducted to the chapel, and, as it was *my* curiosity that had led us thither, I was placed in the Maintenon's own tribune; my company in the adjourning gallery. The pensioners, two and two, each band headed by a man, march orderly to their seats, and sing the whole service, which I confess was not a little tedious. The young ladies, to the number of two hundred and fifty, are dressed in black, with short aprons of the

same, the latter and their stays bound with blue, yellow, green or red, to distinguish the classes; the captains and lieutenants have knots of a different colour for distinction. Their hair is curled and powdered, their coiffure a sort of French round-eared caps, with white tippets, a sort of ruff and large tucker: in short, a very pretty dress. The nuns are entirely in black, with crape veils and long trains, deep white handkerchiefs and forehead cloths, and a very long train. The chapel is plain, but very pretty, and in the middle of the choir, under a flat marble, lies the foundress. Madame de Cambis, one of the nuns, who are about forty, is beautiful as a Madonna. The Abbess has no distinction but a larger and richer cross: her apartment consists of two very small rooms. Of Madame de Maintenon we did not see fewer than twenty pictures. The young one looking over her shoulder has a round face, without the least resemblance to those of her latter age. That in the royal mantle, of which you know I have a copy, is the most repeated, but there is another with a longer and leaner face, which has by far the most sensible look. She is in black, with a high point head and band, a long train, and is sitting in a chair of purple velvet. Before her knees stands her niece, Madame de Noailles, a child; at a distance a view of Versailles or St. Cyr, I could not distinguish which. We were shown some rich *reliquaires*, and the *corpo santa* that was sent to her by the Pope. We were then carried into the public room of each class. In the first, the young ladies, who were playing at chess, were ordered to sing to us the choruses of *Athaliah*; in another, they danced minuets and country-dances, while a nun, not quite able as St. Cecilia, played on a violin. In the others, they acted before us the

proverbs or conversations written by Madame de Maintenon for their instruction—for she was not only their foundress but their saint, and their adoration of her memory has quite eclipsed the Virgin Mary. We saw their dormitory, and saw them at supper; and at last were carried to their archives, where they produced volumes of her letters, and where one of the nuns gave me a small piece of paper with three sentences in her handwriting. I forgot to tell you that this kind dame, who took to me extremely, asked if we had many convents and relics in England. I was much embarrassed for fear of destroying her good opinion of me, and so said we had but few now. Oh! we went, too, to the *apothecairie*, where they treated us to cordials, and where one of the ladies told me inoculation was a sin, as it was a voluntary detention from Mass, and as voluntary a cause of eating *gras*. Our visit concluded in the garden, now grown very venerable, where the young ladies played at little games before us. After a stay of four hours we took our leave. I begged the Abbess's blessing; she smiled, and said she doubted I should not place much faith in it. She is a comely old gentlewoman, and very proud of having seen Madame de Maintenon.—Well! was not I in the right to wish you with me? could you have passed a day more agreeably?

"I will conclude my letter with a most charming trait of Madame de Mailly, which cannot be misplaced in such a chapter of royal concubines. Going to St. Sulpice, after she had lost the King's heart, a person present desired the crowd to make way for her. Some brutal young officers said, *'Comment, pour cette catin-la!'* She turned to them, and with the most charming modesty said, *'Messieurs, puisque vous*

me connoissez, priez Dieu pour moi.'—I am sure it will bring the tears into your eyes. Was she not the Publican, and Maintenon the Pharisee? Good night; I hope I am going to dream of all I have been seeing. As my impressions and my fancy, when I am pleased, are apt to be strong, my night perhaps may still be more productive of ideas than the day has been. It will be charming indeed if Madame de Cambis is the ruling tint. Adieu!"

Walpole left Paris early in October. It is amusing to read Walpole's excuse to George Montagu for his inability to smuggle things to England. "I could certainly buy many things for you here, that you would like, the reliques of the last age's magnificence; but since my Lady Holdernesse invaded the Custom House with an hundred and fourteen gowns, in the reign of that twopenny monarch George Grenville, the ports are so guarded, that not a soul but a smuggler can smuggle anything into England; and I suppose you would not care to pay seventy-five per cent. on second-hand commodities," he wrote. "All I transported three years ago was conveyed under the cannon of the Duke of Richmond [then British Ambassador at Paris]. I have no interest in our present representative [Earl Harcourt]; nor, if I had, is he returning. Plate, of all earthly vanities, is the most impassable: it is not contraband in its metallic capacity, but totally so in its personal; and the officers of the Custom House not being philosophers enough to separate the substance from the superficies, brutally hammer both to pieces, and return you—only the intrinsic; a compensation which you, who are no Member of Parliament, would not, I trow, be satisfied with. Thus I doubt you must retrench your generosity to yourself, unless you can

contract it into an Elzevir size, and be content with anything one can bring in one's pocket."

Walpole reported his return to England from Strawberry Hill on October 16th: "I arrived at my own Louvre last Wednesday night, and am now at my Versailles." And very happy he was to be back again. "I feel myself here like a swan that, after living six weeks in a nasty pool upon a common, is got back into its own Thames," he confided to George Montagu. "I do nothing but plume and clean myself, and enjoy the verdure and silver waves. Neatness and greenth are so essential in my opinion to the country, that in France, where I see nothing but chalk and dirty peasants, I seem in a terrestrial purgatory that is neither town or country. The face of England is so beautiful, that I do not believe Tempe or Arcadia were half so rural; for both, lying in hot climates, must have wanted the turf of our lawns. It is unfortunate to have so pastoral a taste, when I want a cane more than a crook. We are absurd creatures; at twenty I loved nothing but London."

Chapter VIII

"THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO"

"I DO not look upon myself as an author," John Pinkerton relates that Walpole said to him in his later days. "I may say, without the vain affectation of modesty, that I have done nothing." In fact, he hated to be regarded as a man of letters: to have been classed with even the most eminent of the Grub Street group—such an one as Samuel Johnson, for instance—would have wounded his pride and almost broken his heart. You might accept a sinecure here and there, but you must not work for money, was his code. Actually, he worked like a galley-slave at his works; but he always pretended that he just dashed them off. William Beckford, another "amateur" author, acted in the same way: he stated that he wrote "Vathek" in three days in a chalet in his grounds at Fonthill: whereas even his own correspondence proved that he laboured at it for at least a year.

"I have always tried hard to escape the acquaintance and conversation of authors," he said on another occasion. "An author talking of his own works, or censuring those of others, is to me a dose of hypeccaccuana. I like only a few, who can in company forget their authorship, and remember plain sense." Inconsistency being the badge of all our tribe, Walpole, if he did not talk of his own works, at least

wrote frequently about them—anyhow, his letters contain numerous references to them.

So early as 1751, Walpole began his "Memoirs of the last Ten Years of the Reign of George II", but this was published posthumously in 1822; while his "Journal of the Reign of George III" did not appear until 1859. However, in 1757 he published "A Letter from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his friend, Lien Chu, at Peking", a political squib in the manner of Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes". He tried in vain to hide his satisfaction with this *je d'esprit*, which to-day is not easy to follow. To Horace Mann he wrote on May 19: "The enclosed is an exact picture of our situation, and is perhaps the only political paper ever written, in which no man of any party can dislike or deny a single fact. I wrote it in an hour and a half, and you will perceive that it must be the effect of a single thought." Eight days later he addresses George Montagu: "I am glad you like 'Xo Ho'. I think everybody else does, which is strange, considering it has no merit but truth. Mrs. Clive cried out like you, 'Lord! you will be sent to the Tower'. 'Well,' said I, coolly, 'my father was there before me.'" To the same correspondent, on June 2nd, he writes: "I don't know how you came not to see the advertisement of 'Xo Ho', which has been in continually. Four editions were published in ten days." With his unerring instinct, Austin Dobson selected a passage in this agreeable trifle on the variation of the English climate by the Chinese philosopher: "The English have no sun, no summer as we have, at least their sun does not scorch like ours. They content themselves with names: at a certain time of the year they leave their capital,

and that makes summer; they go out of the city, and that makes the country. Their monarch, when he goes into the country, passes in a calash by a row of high trees, goes along a gravel walk, crosses one of the chief streets, is driven by the side of a canal between two rows of lamps, at the end of which he has a small house [Kensington Palace], and then he is supposed to be in the country. I saw this ceremony yesterday: as soon as he was gone the men put on under vestments of white linen, and the women left off those vast draperies, which they call hoops, and which I have described to thee; and then all the men and all the women said *it was hot.* If thou will believe me, I am now [in May] writing to thee before a fire." Dobson wonders, and not without reason, whether Walpole supplied Goldsmith with his first idea of "The Citizen of the World".

Walpole's outstanding literary work is "The Castle of Otranto". A story, first published in 1765, which has been through many editions, and in 1929 appears in admirable form and with an introductory essay and notes by that distinguished critic Mr. Oswald Doughty, may fairly claim to have "arrived" as a classic. "Walpole, long before," Mr. Doughty writes, "had sought to express in stone, in his castle of Strawberry, the medieval, romantic dream-world of his own subconsciousness. Now, he was to attempt to give it literary expression." The author told John Pinkerton: "I wrote the 'Castle of Otranto' in eight days, or, rather, eight nights; for my general hours of composition are from ten o'clock at night till two in the morning, when I am sure not to be disturbed by my visitants. While I am writing, I take several cups of coffee." On this first draft, however, he worked for the next two months.

The idea of this story came to him suddenly. He wrote to William Cole: "Shall I even confess to you what was the origin of the romance? I waked one morning in the beginning of last June from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down and began to write without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it—add, that I was very glad to think of anything rather than politics. In short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening I wrote from the time I had drunk my tea about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking, in the middle of a sentence."

Walpole, having completed his book, could not make up his mind whether to publish it or not. No man better enjoyed a laurel-wreath than he; on the other hand, no one more feared a breath of ridicule. Thomas Gray advised him to have it printed; but the author still hummed and haa-ed. At last, he decided to issue it, but, fearful of its reception, to issue it anonymously. The title-page of the first edition runs: "The Castle of Otranto, A Story. Translated by William Marshal, Gent. From the original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas, at Otranto. London: Printed for Tho. Lownds, in Fleet Street. MDCCLXV."

With "The Castle of Otranto" Walpole struck

an unexplored vein of romance, and one that has since been worked by other writers from Clara Reeve to Scott; and it "caught on" at once. The five hundred copies, of which the first edition consisted, were soon bought out, and Walpole, hearing his story praised on all hands, began to regret that he had not put his name to it. Sending a copy to Lord Hertford, he said that "the enclosed novel is much in vogue; the author is not known, but if you should not happen to like it, I could give you a reason why you should not say so." That was at the end of January, 1765; and on March 26th he wrote to the same correspondent, "The success of 'The Castle of Otranto' has, at last, brought me to own it, though the wildness of it made me terribly afraid; but it was comfortable to have it please so much, before any mortal suspected the author: indeed it met with too much honour, for at first it was universally believed to be Mr. Gray's." More than half a century later Walter Scott could say of the story: "The applause due to chastity and precision of style, to a happy combination of supernatural agency with human interest, to a tone of feudal manners and language, sustained by characters strongly drawn and well discriminated, and to unity of action producing scenes alternatively of interest and grandeur; the applause, in fine, which cannot be devised to him who can excite the passions of fear and of pity, must be awarded to the author of 'The Castle of Otranto'." How Walpole would have loved to have read this, and how he would have hated Hazlitt's verdict: "'The Castle of Otranto' is, to my notion, dry, meagre, and without effect. It is done upon false principles of taste. The great hand and arm which are thrust into the courtyard,

and remain there all day long, are the pasteboard machinery of a pantomime; they shock the senses, and have no purchase upon the imagination. They are a matter-of-fact impossibility; a fixture, and no longer a phantom. *Quod sic mihi ostendis, incredulus odi.*"

As for Walpole himself, twenty years after the story had appeared, he criticised it to Hannah More: "It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written, an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were comformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it." Years later he was surprised to learn that there was a castle at Otranto. "Lady Craven," he mentions, "has just brought me from Italy a most acceptable present, a drawing of the Castle of Otranto. It is odd that that back-window corresponds with the description in my romance. When I wrote it, I did not even know that there was a castle at Otranto. I wanted a name of some place in the south of Italy, and Otranto struck me in the map."

Here may be mentioned two other of Walpole's principal works: the "Historic Doubts of Richard the Third" and "The Mysterious Mother".

The "Historic Doubts", which appeared in February, 1768, arose from the author's desire to vindicate Richard III from the usual character given him, which Walpole considered had been deliberately blackened in order to whiten that of Henry VII. It was a piece of special pleading, and aroused much controversy among students. George Selwyn liked

it much, and wrote enthusiastically to Lord Carlisle: "Walpole's book came out yesterday, but I got it from him on Saturday, and my Lord Molyneux carried it for me that morning to Sir John Lambert, to be forwarded to your Lordship immediately. I am confident that it will entertain you much, and, what is more extraordinary, convince you; because I have that good opinion of your understanding as not to think that ages and numbers can sanctify falsehood, and that such is your love of truth as to be glad to find it, although at the expense of quitting the prejudice of your whole precedent life. I will not forestall your judgement by saying anything more of this book, but only wish it may afford as much entertainment as it has me. This historic doubter dined with me yesterday. [George James ('Gilly')] Williams, Lord March, Cadogan, and Fanshaw, *qui ma demande à diner*, at the House [of Commons]. Harry seems mightily pleased with the success which his new book has met with. Nobody cavils at anything, but here and there an expression. His hypothesis is approved of from the most reasonable conjectures, and the most indisputable authorities. I would have had Bully [*i.e.*, Frederick, Viscount Bolingbroke] to have dined with us, but he was engaged to his brother, *qui donne à diner très souvent*. I told him, that if he would pay his court to Harry, he might give him a lick of his *vernis*, that would do his reputation no harm."

Walpole had begun in the late winter of 1766 a tragedy, entitled *The Mysterious Mother*, and in March two years later fifty copies were printed at Strawberry Hill for presentation to his friends. Walpole at one time had an idea of its being performed—he even went so far as to write an epilogue

for Kitty Clive to speak; but, on reflection, he decided that this must not be done. "The subject is so horrid," he said, "that I thought it would shock rather than give satisfaction to an audience. Still, I found it so truly tragic in the two essential springs of terror and pity, that I could not resist the impulse of adapting it to the scene, though it should never be practical to produce it there." To Madam du Deffand he wrote: "'Il ne vous plairoit pas assurément; il n'y a pas de beaux sentiments. Il n'y a que des passions sans envelope, des crimes, des repentis, et des horreurs.' Yet Byron described it as a tragedy of the highest order."

Walpole did not intend *The Mysterious Mother* for general circulation. Copies, however, were secured by two piratical booksellers, and each announced an edition. His hand being thus forced, he arranged with Dodsley to print an authorised edition, which was duly advertised. However, finding that the stolen impressions were, of course, dropped, he ordered his to be withheld, and no copies were ever sold. There was another attempt later, in 1791, to publish it in Ireland, which was defeated by the action of the Earl of Charlemont, to whom Walpole wrote a grateful letter. "Mr. Walker has acquainted me, my Lord," he said, "that your Lordship has most kindly interposed to prevent a bookseller of Dublin from printing an edition of *The Mysterious Mother* without my consent; and with the conscious dignity of a great mind, your Lordship has not even hinted to me the graciousness of that favour. How have I merited such condescending goodness, my Lord? Had I a prospect of longer life, I never could pay the debt of gratitude; the weightier as your Lordship did not intend I should

know that I owe it. My gratitude can never be effaced; and I am charmed that it is due, and due with so much honour to me, that nothing could bribe me to have less obligation to your Lordship, of which I am so proud. But as to the play itself, I doubt it must take its fate. Mr. Walker tells me the booksellers have desired him to remonstrate to me, urging that they have already expended fifty pounds; and Mr. Walker adds, as no doubt would be the case, that should this edition be stifled, when now expected, some other printer would publish it. I certainly might indemnify the present operator, but I know too much of the craft, not to be sure that I should be persecuted by similar exactions; and alas! I have exposed myself but too much to the tyranny of the press, not to know that it taxes delinquents as well as multiplies their faults.

"In truth, my Lord, it is too late now to hinder copies of my play from being spread. It has appeared here, both whole and in fragments; and to prevent a spurious one, I was forced to have some printed myself; therefore, if I consent to an Irish edition, it is from no vain desire of diffusing the performance. Indeed, my good Lord, I have lived too long not to have divested myself both of vanity and affected modesty. I have not existed to past seventy-three without having discovered the futility and triflingness of my own talents; and at the same time, it would be impertinent to pretend to think that there is no merit in the execution of a tragedy, on which I have been so much flattered; though I am sincere in condemning the egregious absurdity of selecting a subject so improper for the stage, and even offensive to private readers.

"But I have said too much on a personal theme; and therefore, after repeating a million of thanks to your Lordship for the honour of your interposition, I will beg your Lordship, if you please, to signify to the bookseller that you withdraw your prohibition: but I shall not answer Mr. Walker's letter till I have your Lordship's approbation, for you are both my Lord Chamberlain and licencer; and though I have a tolerably independent spirit, I may safely trust myself under the absolute power of one who has voluntarily protected me against the licentiousness of those who have invaded my property, and who distinguishes so accurately and justly between licence and liberty."

Shortly after *The Mysterious Mother* was finished, there came to pass the Walpole-Chatterton incident, which aroused so much controversy at the time and since. In March, 1769, Thomas Chatterton wrote from Bristol, where he was living, a letter in which he informed the author of the "Anecdotes of Painting" that he had old manuscripts about art, and that he ventured to send a curiosity, "The Ryse of Peynetignge in Englande". Walpole was interested, and replied without delay:

"I cannot but think myself singularly obliged by a gentleman with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted, when I read your very curious and kind letter, which I have this minute received. I give you a thousand thanks for it, and for the very obliging offer you make me, of communicating your MSS. to me. What you have already sent me is very valuable, and full of information; but instead of correcting you, Sir, you are far more able to correct me. I have not the happiness of understanding the Saxon language, and without your learned notes

should not have been able to comprehend Rowley's text.

"As a second edition of my 'Anecdotes' was published but last year, I must not flatter myself that a third will be wanted soon; but I shall be happy to lay up any notices you will be so good as to extract for me, and send me at your leisure; for, as it is uncertain when I may use them, I would by no means borrow and detain your MSS.

"Give me leave to ask where Rowley's poems are to be found? I should not be sorry to print them; or at least a specimen of them, if they have never been printed.

"The Abbot John's verses that you have given me are wonderful for their harmony and spirit, though there are some words I do not understand.

"You do not point out exactly the time when he lived, which I wish to know, as I suppose it was long before John Ab Eyck's discovery of oil-painting. If so, it confirms what I had guessed, and have hinted in my 'Anecdotes', that oil-painting was known here much earlier than that discovery or revival.

"I will not trouble you with more questions now, Sir, but flatter myself from the humanity and politeness you have already shown me, that you will sometimes give me leave to consult you. I hope, too, you will forgive the simplicity of my direction, as you have favoured me with no other."

Chatterton wrote again, saying that he had other manuscripts; that he himself was the son of a poor widow, and that he was clerk to an attorney, but had a taste for more elegant studies. Something aroused Walpole's suspicions, and he consulted Mason and Gray, who were both of the opinion that the

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

manuscripts were spurious. Walpole wrote to the poet, saying that doubts had been cast upon the genuineness of the manuscript. Chatterton replied that the manuscripts were certainly genuine, and demanded their return. Walpole, on the eve of going to Paris, neglected to do this, and it was August before he bethought himself of them. Then he began a letter to the poet on his re-demanding his manuscripts; but not choosing to enter into a controversy with him, he did not finish it, but contented himself with returning the papers. The letter, notwithstanding that it was not sent to the addressee, is worth reprinting:

"I do not see, I must own, how those precious manuscripts, of which you have sent me a few extracts, should be lost to the world by my detaining your letters. Do the originals not exist, from whence you say you copied your extracts, and from which you offered me more extracts? In truth, by your first letter I understood that the originals themselves were in your possession by the free and voluntary offer you made me of them, and which you know I did not choose to accept. If Mr. Barrett (who, give me leave to say, cannot know much of antiquity if he believes in the authenticity of those papers) intends to make use of them, would he not do better to have recourse to the originals, than to the slight fragments you have sent me? You say, Sir, you know them to be genuine; pray let me ask again, of what age are they? and how have they been transmitted? In what book of any age is there mention made either of Rowley or of the poetical monk, his ancient predecessor in such poetry? poetry so resembling both Spenser and the moderns, and written in metre invented long since Rowley, and

longer since the monk wrote. I doubt Mr. Barrett himself will find it difficult to solve these doubts.

"For myself, I undoubtedly will never print those extracts as genuine, which I am far from believing they are. If you want them, Sir, I will have them copied, and send you the copy. But having a little suspicion that your letters may have been designed to laugh at me, if I had fallen into the snare, you will allow me to preserve your original letters, as an ingenious contrivance, however unsuccessful. This seems the more probable, as any man would understand by your first letter, that you either was possessed of the original manuscript or had taken copies of them; whereas now you talk as if you had no copy but those written at the bottom of the very letters I have received from you.

"I own I should be better diverted, if you proved that you have chosen to entertain yourself at my expense, than if you really thought these pieces ancient. The former would show you had little opinion of my judgement; the latter, that you ought not to trust too much to your own. I should not at all take the former ill, as I am not vain of it; I should be very sorry for the latter, as you say, Sir, you are very young, and it would be a pity an ingenious young man should be too early prejudiced in his own favour. . . ."

What Chatterton thought he expressed in his lines, "To Horace Walpole". He died of poison, induced by a period of starvation, in August, 1770.

The first edition of Chatterton's "Miscellanies" did not understate the current gossip which represented Walpole as "the primary cause of Chatterton's dismal catastrophe"; and Walpole defended him-

self in a very lengthy letter. Feeling ran high against him, notwithstanding his explanation, and continued so for many years, to his great regret and annoyance. "Do not expect," Miss Seward wrote in 1787, "that I can learn to esteem that fastidious and unfeeling being, to whose insensibility we owe the extinction of the greatest poetical luminary, if we may judge from the brightness of its dawn, that ever rose in our or any other hemisphere." Others were on hand with pen and by voice. Latitia Matilda Hawkins, no great lover of Walpole, was, in this matter, kind to him. "He began to go down in public favour from the time when he resented the imposition of Chatterton," she wrote. "It was not the usual justice of the world to be angry at a resistance proved so reasonable; or make an innocent person responsible in conscience for a catastrophe to which the habits of the young man, as well as the wildness of his genius, led. I am confident, had he asked Mr. Walpole for twenty pounds, and only shown what he *could* do, he might have obtained it." Even the usually genial Austin Dobson in his Memoir of Walpole is a little spiteful, when he says: "Upon the principle that 'two of a trade can ne'er agree', it is difficult to conceive of any abiding alliance between the author of the fabricated 'Tragedy of Ælla' and the author of the fabricated 'Castle of Otranto'."

That Walpole was hard hit by the general disapprobation is clear. Fifteen years after the unfortunate incident he wrote with ill-concealed bitterness to Hannah More:

"On recollection, you had better call me Mr. Anybody, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account;

and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends will show my letters to him, you would find that I was as tender to him as to your milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not." The reason for this prolonged vituperation is difficult to trace, beyond the fact that the public imagination was struck by the death of a great poet who, at the age of eighteen, committed suicide after a course of starvation. But why fasten the blame on Walpole? He was, of course, wrong in not returning the copies, or causing them to be returned, when he had decided that he would not have anything to do with them. That is beyond dispute; but, after all, it is a venial offence. He, a dilettant, had been in the first instance deceived by the brilliant forgeries, and no connoisseur likes to be hoaxed, and his *amour propre* was greater than that of most people.

As Miss Hawkins says, if Chatterton had asked him for a sum of money, it would probably have been sent, for Walpole was not ungenerous, even when benefactions were unsolicited, as the following letters to his Deputy, Grosvenor Bedford, show:

"September 24th, 1762. I would not trouble you with the enclosed commissions, but as I think you pass by both doors almost every day, be as good as to enquire if the persons mentioned in these advertisements are really objects of charity, and if they are, I will beg you to leave a guinea for each, and put it to my account."

"July 30th, 1764. I enclose three advertisements, which, at your leisure, as you go into the City, I will beg you to enquire after, and if their cases are

really compassionate, to give half a guinea for me to each, and to send a guinea to the common side of the Fleet Prison, where they advertise their sickness—but don't mention me."

He frequently, when he was at Strawberry Hill, asked Bedford to undertake various commissions for him that could not possibly be construed as part of the duties of his office, as witness this letter of September 9th, 1762: "I must trouble you in an affair in which it is not easy, I fear, to assist me. My servant, Henry Jones, is grown old, and wants to retire. If you could find a very good servant for me, it would be of great use. I will tell you exactly what sort of man I want. He is to be steward and butler, not my gentleman, nor have anything to do with dressing me, or with my clothes, but is to wait at table and at tea. His chief business will be to look after my family, in which he must be strict; and he must understand buying and selling for what I shall chiefly expect will be, that he shall bring me every Saturday night the house bills for the week, and every month those of the other tradesmen and servants. For these reasons, which I cannot dispense with, I choose to have a grave servant of forty, or near it, with a very good character, and, I should wish, not married. When you enquire, be so good as not to let it be known that it is for me; as I do not like to have servants present themselves, whom I should probably not care to take. The wages I shall make little difficulty about, if it is one that I can depend upon for being careful in my family, and letting there be no waste. . . . One material condition will be, that he is not to have friends coming to my house after him."

On the other hand, if Walpole sometimes troubled

Bedford unduly, he, in return, proved himself a staunch friend. "Though I am sensible, I have no pretensions for asking you a favour, and, indeed, should be very unwilling to trespass on your good nature," he wrote in September, 1763, to George Grenville, who was then First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, "yet I flatter myself I shall not be thought quite impertinent in interceding for a person, who I can answer has neither been to blame, nor any way deserved punishment, and therefore I think you, Sir, will be ready to save him from prejudice. The person is my Deputy, Mr. Grosvenor Bedford, who, above twenty-five years ago, was appointed Collector of the Customs at Philadelphia by my father. I hear he is threatened to be turned out. If the least fault can be laid to his charge, I do not desire to have him protected. If there cannot, I am too well persuaded, Sir, of your justice, not to be sure you will be pleased to protect him. When I have appealed to your good nature and justice, it would be impertinent for me to say more than that I am, etc., etc., Hor. Walpole."

Also, he who asked nothing for himself—it is true he had enough—would solicit preferment for others. "There is fallen a small living in Lancashire in the gift ot the Crown, by the death of Mr. Tully, the incumbent: 'tis called Adlington or Adlingham, and is worth about an hundred a year," he wrote from Downing Street in 1742 to Henry Pelham. "If I could obtain it for Mr. Ashton of Lancaster, a clergyman who lives with me, and who is reckoned to have some merit, I should think myself extremely happy, and much more so, if I could add it to the very great obligations which we already have to Mr. Pelham."

Thomas Ashton was appointed to Aldingham at once; seven years later became Rector of Sturminster Marshall, in Dorsetshire; and in 1752 was given the rich living of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, in the City of London. Walpole, who remembered him from the Cambridge days, had always interested himself in Ashton, could really claim some credit for his endeavours to start him in his profession. "He has preached Service at Somerset Chapel," he wrote to Richard West in 1742. "I am sure that you would approve his compositions, and admire them still more when you heard him deliver them."

Before Ashton went to St. Botolph the pair had parted. It really seemed like the story of the eleven obstinate jurymen: either Walpole was unfortunate in the intimates he selected; or else they were most ungrateful folk.

As regards Ashton, Walpole wrote bitterly to Sir Horace Mann on July, 1750: "I believe you have often heard me mention a Mr. Ashton, a clergyman, who, in one word, has great preferments, and owes everything upon earth to me. I have long had reason to complain of his behaviour; in short, my father is dead, and I can make no bishops. He has at last quite thrown off the mask, and in the most direct manner, against my will, has written against my friend, Dr. Middleton, taking for his motto these lines:

"Nullius addictus jurare in verba Magistri
Quid verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.

"I have forbid him my house, and wrote this paraphrase upon his picture:

"Nullius addictus munus meminisse Patroni,
Quid vacat et qui dat, curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.

"I own it was pleasant to me the other day, on meeting Mr. Tonson, his bookseller, at the Speaker's, and asking him if he had sold many of Mr. Ashton's books, to be told, 'Very few indeed'."

Chapter IX

IN PARTIAL RETIREMENT

ONE of Walpole's last excursions in the political field was to come forward in defence of his cousin, General (afterwards Field-Marshal) Henry Seymour Conway, who was a member of the House of Commons. In the Wilkes affair, Conway supported the Whigs in resisting the arbitrary measures adopted by the Ministers, which greatly annoyed George III, who proposed to George Grenville that he should be dismissed from all his military and civil employments. In the end this came to pass, but it was not made known until the House rose in April, 1764. The case for the Government was put forward in an "Address to the Public on the Dismission of a General Officer," and to this Walpole replied in a "Counter-Address".

"You will wonder that I have been so long without giving you any sign of life," he wrote to Conway, on June 5th, 1764, "yet, though not writing *to* you, I have been employed *about* you, as I have ever since the 21st of April; a day your enemies shall have some cause to remember. I had writ nine or ten sheets of an answer to the *Address to the Public*, when I received the enclosed mandate. You will see *my masters* order me as a subaltern of the Exchequer, to drop you and defend them—but you will see too, that, instead of obeying, *I have given warning*. I would not communicate any part of

this transaction to you, till it was out of my hands, because I knew your affection for me would not approve my going so far—but it was necessary. My honour required that I should declare my adherence to you in the authentic manner. I found that some persons had dared to doubt whether I would risk everything for you. You see by these letters that Mr. Grenville himself had presumed so. Even a change in the Administration, however unlikely, might happen before I had any opportunity of declaring myself; and then those who should choose to put the worst construction either on my actions or my silence might say what they pleased. I was waiting some opportunity; they have put it into my hands, and I took care not to let it slip. Indeed they have put more into my hands, which I have not let slip neither. Could I expect they would give me so absurd an account of Mr. Grenville's conduct, and give it me in writing? They can only add to this obligation that of provocation to print my letter, which, however strong in facts, I have taken care to make very decent in terms, because it imports us to have the candid (that is, I fear the mercenary) on our side;—no, that we must not expect, but least disarmed."

Walpole's motives in writing this letter are explained in his "Memoirs of George III": "On the first of June I received a letter from Mr. Thomas Pitt, desiring me to contradict a report said to come from me charging Mr. Grenville with having said that if Mr. Conway voted according to his conscience he must be turned out. Thus had they dressed up the real report and substance in absurd terms that nobody might believe it. I immediately comprehended that this was a mandate issued to me as an

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SELWYN AND FREDERICK HOWARD, FIFTH EARL OF CARLISLE.
After Reynolds.

inferior officer of the Exchequer, to justify Grenville and sacrifice my friend. I perceived, too, the advantage they had put into my hands, and determined to make the most of it. Pitt's letter was so incredibly weak, and owned so much, that nothing was easier than to confute it. To add to their confusion, I had preserved exact minutes of the two conversations with Pitt and Grenville, of which they had had no suspicion. I felt the opportunity of doing justice both to Mr. Conway and to myself, and of making Mr. Grenville understand that, if he did not do me justice in the regularity of my payments, he was at my mercy, and must expect those letters would be laid before the House of Commons. This I hinted obscurely, being determined that nothing but persecution should drive me to that step. Knowing, however, the narrowness of Grenville's mind, it was useful to curb him by this menace, as I did too in the *Counter Address*, and very successfully. I wrote a long, firm, and unpleasant letter in answer to Pitt's, and received another from him before there could be time for it (as he was in Cornwall) but by Grenville's opening mine at the post: for with him was it concerted, and yet so flimsy, so fallen from the arrogance of the former was their reply, that I enjoyed not only triumph, but, I own, the teasing amusement of keeping them in hot water many months—the only use I allowed myself to make of those letters in punishing their culpable behaviour—moderate revenge enough after such insolence! and in which when I had suffered the period to elapse, Grenville was far from having the generosity to imitate me. My payments were carefully made before the Parliament opened. When I had let the Session pass over without making use

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of the materials in my hands, an embargo was laid on the income of my employment. . . . I found means to retaliate, without violating the strictest laws of honour; nor have they been able to reproach me, though I had such opportunities of resembling them."

Conway was presently given a command, and in January, 1772, Walpole from Strawberry Hill, wrote him a humorous letter: "You have read of my calamity without knowing it, and will pity me when you do," he said. "I have been blown up; my castle is blown up; Guy Fawkes has been about my house; and the 5th of November has fallen on the 6th of January! In short, nine thousand powder-mills broke loose yesterday morning on Hounslow Heath; a whole squadron of them came hither, and have broken eight of my painted-glass windows; and the north side of the castle looks as if it had stood a siege. The two saints in the hall have suffered martyrdom! they have had their bodies cut off, and nothing remains but their heads. The two next great sufferers are indeed two of the least valuable, being the passage windows to the library and great parlour—a fine pane is demolished in the round room; and the window by the gallery is damaged. Those in the cabinet, and Holbein room, gallery, and blue-room, and green closet, etc., have escaped. As the storm came from the north-west, the china closet was not touched nor a cup fell down. The bow-window of brave old coloured glass at Mr. Hindley's is massacred, and all the north sides of Twickenham and Brentford are shattered. At London it was proclaimed an earthquake, and half the inhabitants ran into the street.

"As Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance, I must

beseech you to give strict orders that no more powder-mills may blow up. My aunt, Mrs. Kerwood, reading one day in the papers that distiller's had been burnt by the head of the still flying off, said she wondered they did not make an Act of Parliament against the heads of stills flying off. Now, I hold it much easier for you to do a body this service, and would recommend to your consideration, whether it would not be prudent to have all magazines of powder kept under water till they are wanted for service. In the meantime, I expect a pension to make me amends for what I have suffered under the Government. Adieu !"

Walpole decided in 1767 to retire from the House of Commons, where he had served for rather more than a quarter of a century. He had been member for Callington from 1741 to 1753; then he sat for Castle Rising until 1757, when he was returned for Lynn, which his father had represented for forty years. Though he had not shirked his duties, his heart had never been in his work, and it was with relief that he severed his connection with Westminster. "As my senatorial dignity is gone, and the sight of my name is no longer worth threepence ! I shall not put you to expense of a cover, and I hope the advertisement will not be taxed, as I seal it to the paper," he wrote to George Montagu on March 12th, 1768. "In short, I retain so much iniquity from the last infamous Parliament, that you see I would still cheat the public. The comfort I feel in sitting peaceably here, instead of being at Lynn in the high fever of a contested election, which at best would end in my being carried about that large town like the figure of a pope at a bonfire, is very great. I do not think, when that function is over, that I

shall repent my resolution. What could I see, but sons and grandsons playing over the same knaveries, that I have seen their fathers and grandfathers act? Could I hear oratory beyond my Lord Chatham's? Will there ever be parts equal to Charles Townshend's? Will George Grenville cease to be the most tiresome of beings? Will he not be constantly whining, and droning, and interrupting, like a *cigale* in a sultry day in Italy?"

Walpole's intimation that he would not contest Lynn at the next election was conveyed in the following letter to William Langley, and is dated the day after he wrote to Montagu:

"The declining state of my health, and a wish of retiring from all public business, have, for some time, made me think of not offering my service again to the town of Lynn, as one of their representatives in Parliament. I was even on the point, above eighteen months ago, of obtaining to have my seat vacated, by one of those temporary places often bestowed for that purpose: but I thought it more respectful, and more consonant to the great and singular obligations I have to the Corporation and town of Lynn, to wait till I had executed their commands, to the last hour of the commission they had voluntarily entrusted to me.

"Till then, Sir, I did not think of making this declaration; but hearing that dissatisfaction and dissensions have arisen amongst you (of which I am so happy as to have been in no shape the cause), that a warm contest is expected; and dreading to see, in the uncorrupted town of Lynn, what has spread too fatally in other places, and what I fear, will end in the ruin of this constitution and country, I think it my duty, by an early declaration, to

endeavour to preserve the integrity and peace of so great, so respectable, and so unblemished a borough.

"My father was re-chosen by the free voice of Lynn, when imprisoned and expelled by an arbitrary Court and prostitute Parliament, and from affection to his name, not from the smallest merit in me, they unanimously demanded me for their member, while I was sitting for Castle Rising. Gratitude exacts what in any other light might seem vainglorious in me to say, but it is to the lasting honour of the town of Lynn, I declare, that I have represented them in two Parliaments without offering, or being asked for, the smallest gratification by any one of my constituents. May I be permitted, Sir, to flatter meself they are persuaded their otherwise unworthy representative has not disgraced so free and unbiassed a choice?

"I have sat above five-and-twenty years in Parliament; and allow me to say, Sir, as I am, in a manner, giving up my account to my constituents, that my conduct in Parliament has been as pure as my manner of coming in thither. No man who is, or has been, Minister can say that I have ever asked or received a personal favour. My votes have neither been dictated by favour nor influence; but by the principles on which the Revolution was founded, the principles by which we enjoy the establishment of the present royal family, the principles by which the town of Lynn has ever adhered, and by which my father commenced and closed his venerable life. The best and only honours I desire, would be to find that my conduct has been acceptable and satisfactory to my constituents.

"From your kindness, Sir, I must entreat to have

this notification made in the most respectful and grateful manner to the Corporation and town of Lynn. Nothing can exceed the obligations I have to them but my sensibility to their favours; and be assured, Sir, that no terms can outgo the esteem I have for so upright and untainted a borough, or the affection I feel for all their goodness to my family and to me. My trifling services will be overpaid if they graciously accept my intention of promoting their union, and preserving their virtue; and though I may be forgotten, I never shall or can forget the obligations they have conferred on, Sir, their and your most devoted humble servant, Horace Walpole."

Walpole was now able to be more regularly at Strawberry Hill, though he still maintained a London house—the lease of 5, Arlington Street having fallen in in 1779, he removed to Berkeley Square. He would now have been almost entirely happy, but for the jar of family affairs, which harassed him all his life. There were, however, compensations. For instance, he was pleased when a favourite niece, Maria, an illegitimate daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, and the widow of James, second Earl Waldegrave, married William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, in 1772. He wrote to congratulate her: "Having long known, Madam, that your understanding is as good as your heart is excellent, I must believe that you have not changed a plan of conduct which I thought so right without having still stronger reasons for what you have done. I am very happy to hear that, though forced to act impartially, his Majesty has softened his justice with kindness. It must be my prayer, as well as expectation, that your virtues will reconcile the King to you and ease his Royal

Highness's mind of the only pang which, I flatter myself, you will ever occasion to him.

"My wish is to pay my duty to you, Madam, immediately, and to the Duke, if I might be allowed that honour; but as I think that would be too great liberty to take without his Royal Highness's permission, I must hope that the kind familiarity which you still show me, Madam, and which I burn to return, but restrain from a proper respect, will prescribe the conduct to me which his Royal Highness and you choose I should observe, and which may best express the regard with which I am his and your Royal Highness's most faithful and most obedient, humble servant, Horace Walpole."

Walpole wrote almost jubilantly to Sir Horace Mann at Florence: "There is an end of palliating, suppressing, or disbelieving: the marriage (my niece's marriage) is formally notified to the King by the Duke of Gloucester. Many symptoms had convinced me of late that so it would be. Last Wednesday I received a letter signed *Maria Gloucester*, acquainting me the declaration had been made, and been received by his Majesty with grief, tenderness, and justice. I say justice, *tout oncle* as I am, for it would have been very unjust to the Duke of Cumberland to have made any other distinction between two brothers equally in fault, than what affection without overt acts cannot help making. This implies that the Duke of Gloucester must undergo the same prohibition as his brother did, which I am told is to be the case, though the step is not yet taken.

"Having acted so rigorously while I could have any doubt of any sort left, it was but decent now to show that respect, nay gratitude, for so great an honour done to the family, which was due to the

Prince, and still more to his honour and justice. I accordingly begged the Duchess to ask leave for me to kiss his Royal Highness's hand, which was immediately granted. I went directly to the Pavilions at Hampton Court, where they were, and the Duke received me with great goodness, even drawing an arm-chair for me himself when I refused to continue sitting by the Duchess, or even to sit at all. He entered into the detail of his reasons for declaring the marriage, which he knew, by a former letter to the Duchess, I had approved their not publishing so far as her taking the title; and by something that dropped apropos to the title, I am persuaded that my having obstinately avoided all connection with him had been the principal cause of his anger, though I do not doubt but some who were averse to the marriage had said everything they could to the disadvantage of the family; and as I had shown most disapprobation of the connection, impressions against me naturally took the easiest root. Well, here ends my part of this history, I neither shall be, nor seek to be a favourite, and as little a counsellor. Were I to advise, it should be to submit themselves entirely to the King. A Prince of the Blood, especially of a character so esteemed, may give great trouble, but whom do they hurt but their own family? The Duke of Cumberland was slighted by the Opposition, because he married the sister of the man in England the most obnoxious to them. To them, the Duke of Gloucester is a very different case, and they are not likely to make the distinction, but I shall think the Duchess very ill-advised, if she does not dissuade everything that can displease the King. Her temper is warm, but she has an admirable understanding and a thousand virtues. You will be

charmed, I am sure, with an instance of her modesty and humility. She asked me if I did not approve her signing herself *Maria Gloucester*, and not simply Maria in the royal style. 'I thought,' said she, 'it was . . . to assume it, but . . . I recollected that Maria was once all the name I had any right to. I thought this . . .' We have another instance in our family, and I set it down as the most honourable alliance in the pedigree. The Dowager Lady Walpole, you know, was a French staymaker's daughter. When Ambassadress in France, the Queen expressed surprise at her speaking so good French. Lady Walpole said she was a French woman. *'Française, Madame! et de quelle famille?' 'D'aucune, Madame,'* answered my aunt. Don't you think that *aucune* sounded greater that Montmorency would have done? One must have a great soul to be of *aucune* or . . . families, which is not necessary to be a Howard."

Walpole sent his niece a well-meant letter of warning: "That you have enemies, my dear Madam, I do not doubt; your merit and fortune will raise you numbers of such in those who have not the former, and are given up to the pursuit of the latter. Lies will be the consequence, as your very merit will prevent them from hurting you, were they to speak nothing but truth. All I take the liberty to beseech of you is, not to let your own honest warmth and sincerity add to the number. At least wait till you can make your resentment felt as well as known—or, what is more like you, till it will be noble to forgive. You are now in a position in which your every word will be weighed and, if possible, misinterpreted. In this country nobody escapes; and you are capable of being hurt till the King and Duke are reconciled. I know how

ready you are to bear anything for the Duke's sake: therefore, for his sake, bear ill-nature; and when your own virtue is so great as to be willing to waive the honours due to his wife, rather than obstruct his Royal Highness's return to Court, carry the sacrifice so much farther as not to let the malicious know you know them, since by that frankness you will whet their claws in this only moment in which they can hurt his Royal Highness by keeping him from the King.

"You will say it is very fine in me to preach, who am warm and imprudent, like you and your father; but that is the very reason, my dear Madam, why I do preach. I have felt the inconvenience of incautious anger, and wish my experience may all turn to your service.

"That lies swarm in plenty I know by accident and recent personal experience too. I was told two days ago that a lady had said I had been the cause of the last full publication of your marriage, and that the King believed so. I did not vouchsafe to make an answer. You know, Madam, better than anybody does or can, how true that assertion is. If the King has been told such a gross untruth, I shall certainly be one of the least proper persons in the world to convey to his Majesty what you wish he should be told of your self-denial; yet it does you so much honour, it is such just gratitude to his Royal Highness, and I am so indifferent about myself, that I shall certainly take care your declaration shall be made known to his Majesty—nor have I any doubt but Lord Hertford will be happy to be the messenger. He knows too well the King's affection for the Duke not to be sure he shall execute a welcome office by doing anything that may tend to reconciliation

between the royal brothers, and his letter, which I have already mentioned to you, Madam, and which I here enclose, will convince you Lord Hertford could not think for one moment that he should make his court to his Majesty by inflaming the difference between him and the Duke of Gloucester. The letter, I give you my honour and oath in the most solemn manner, is the genuine identic letter that I received at the time ; nor has Lord Hertford the most distant idea or suspicion of what he was accused, or of my sending you his letter. I do both, in justice to him and myself, to prove to you, my dear Madam, that I would not put your interests into his hands if I were not thoroughly convinced of his zeal to obey you. He is now in Suffolk, or shooting in Norfolk, with my *excellent* nephew. As soon as I am able to see him in town or here, which I have not yet done, I will not lose a moment. I will only beg you to return me his letter, because, though so strong a vindication of him, I am not sure he would like my showing it ; but the goodness of my intention must justify me."

Walpole's nephew, George, third Earl of Orford, had long been a source of irritation to him. Walpole might be quarrelsome, but his manners were good ; the young man was querulous, ill-behaved, and ungracious. So early as the winter of 1762 he interested himself in his nephew, as the following letter indicates : "I must preface what I am going to say," he wrote, "with desiring you to believe that I by no means take the liberty of giving you any advice, and should the proposal I have to make to you be disagreeable, I beg you to excuse it, as I thought it my duty to lay before you anything that is for your advantage, and as you would have

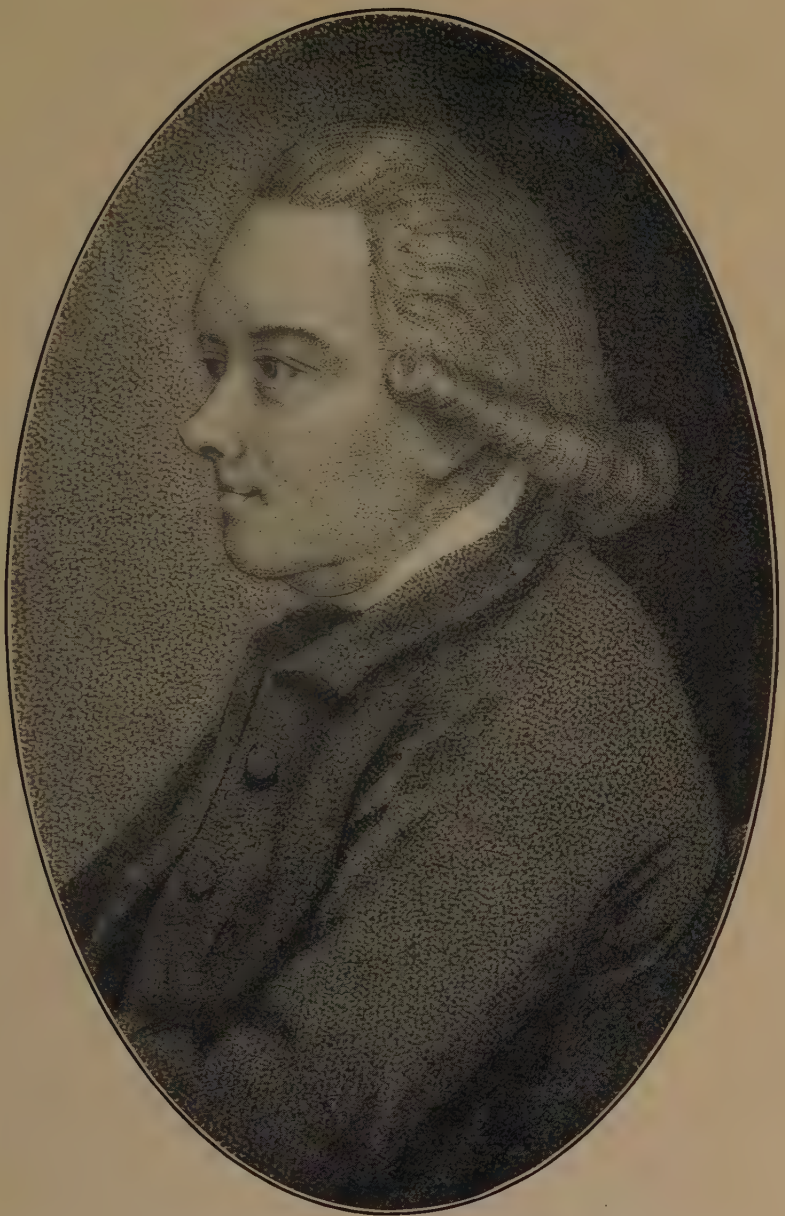
reason to blame me if I declined communicating to you a lucrative offer.

"I last night received a letter from Mr. Fox, in which he tells me that, hearing the [Rangership of St. James's and Hyde] Parks, vacant by Lord Ashburnham's resignation, are worth £2,200 a year, he will, if you desire to succeed him, do his best to procure that employment for you, if he can soon learn that it is your wish. . . .

"If you will be so good as to send me your answer, I will acquaint him with it, or, if you think it more polite to thank Mr. Fox himself for his obliging offer, I shall be very well content to be, as I am in everything else, a cipher, except where I can show myself. . . ."

The extraordinary way, in connection with this affair, that the Earl behaved is mentioned by Walpole in his "Memoirs of George III": "To this letter, nor to the offer, did Lord Orford give himself the trouble of making the least reply; but arriving in Town, on the very day that Parliament met, he came to me, and asked me what he was to do. I replied very coldly, I did not know what he intended to do; but if his meaning was to accept, I supposed he ought to go to Mr. Fox, and tell him so, I having nothing further to do than barely to acquaint him with the offer. Without preface or apology, without recollecting his long enmity to Fox (it is true, he did not know why he was Fox's enemy), and without a hint of reconciliation, to Fox he went, accepted the place, and never gave that Ministry one vote afterwards; continuing in the country, as he would have done if they had given him nothing."

About May, 1773, Lord Orford suffered by an



WILLIAM MASON.

attack of madness. The position was complicated; and the older man, apart from any sorrow he may have felt for the younger, was much troubled by this illness. Lord Orford during the following month got worse, and seemed to be growing childish, though there was no apparent reason why he should not live for a great many years. "Nobody," said Walpole, "has authority to regulate his affairs, which run to ruin, without having recourse to Chancery, which is too shocking a step. We cannot sell his horses, and one of the best has literally been starved by his ministers."

Poor Walpole, who only asked of life that he should be allowed to devote himself to his house, his collections, his press, and the society of his intimates, now found himself, at the age of fifty-six, involved in all sorts of trouble. "Save me, or I shall become a solicitor in Chancery, unless business and fatigue overset my head, and reduce me to my poor nephew's state," he wrote to the Countess of Upper Ossory. "Indeed, I am half hurried out of my senses. Think of me putting queries to lawyers, up to the ears in mortgages, wills, settlements, and contingent remainders. My lawyer is sent away that I may give audience to the Honourable Mr. Manners, the genuine, if not the legitimate, son of Lord William. He came civilly yesterday morning to ask me if he might not seize the pictures at Houghton, which he heard were worth threescore thousand pounds, for nine thousand he has lent Lord Orford. The vulture's throat gaped for them all—what a scene is opened! Houghton will be a rookery of harpies—I doubt there are worse scenes to follow, and black transactions! What occupation chalked out for an end of a life that I had calculated for

tranquillity, and which gout and law are to divide between them !"

The Earl's mother, at Florence, interested herself but little in her son's plight, and showed no inclination to come to England. Her attitude of aloofness seriously complicated the situation, as Walpole plaintively pointed out at length to Sir Horace Mann in the middle of June: "My Lady Orford has employed great art and pains, after a study of six weeks, to write a letter without any meaning, which, with very ordinary talents, might have been written in half an hour. In order to guard every outwork of interest and cunning, she has left the *heart* of the place naked. Well! since she has no feeling for her son, and since she so much suspects my brother and me, who have acted in the fairest and most respectful manner, she teaches us to be cautious on our side. A week after her long-meditated letter came another, desiring I would admit Sir John Pringle to her son—she might as well have sent a tooth-drawer. I did, however, give the doctor notice that he might visit Lord Orford—but the doctor, who has left off business, and never attended mad folks, had too much sense to go on a silly errand, and refused. This, if she inquires, you may tell her, my dear Sir—farther we intend to have no correspondence with her. All you may hint, if you will be so good, is that her Ladyship's letter was so indefinite, and betrayed so little confidence in Sir Edward and me, that you conclude, from the dryness and dissatisfaction of my answer, that I understood it as a rebuke to my officiousness, and that I had only said, that Sir Edward and I, finding our zeal received so coldly, should not trouble her Ladyship any farther; that it is *her* son, not ours; that we

have neither authority nor interest to meddle in his affairs, and that excepting in our care of his person and health, for which too we could not be responsible as we have no power to keep very improper persons from him, we should not concern ourselves any longer. This you will be so good as to say with caution and reserve, and only on being pressed by her—not as a message to her. Do not read this to her, nor let her see it. We cannot be too much aware of a woman, who may have ill designs to us, when she has no tenderness for her own and only child. Indeed, on consultation with the greatest and best lawyers, my brother and I find ourselves possessed of no kind of authority whatever—we could obtain none but by the horrid extremity of taking out a Commission of Lunacy—we find on inquiry, that Lord Orford's affairs and fortune are in the most deplorable situation. We could not undertake the management without the greatest danger to our characters and fortunes; and though we *were* ready to undergo any trouble under the sanction of a mother, we certainly are not inclined to expose ourselves to persecution *from* her. Her *professed* resolution, *we know*, is to secure herself from all trouble and expense, with no, even *pretended*, excuse but that of her health. She came over two years ago on much less cause, and was perfectly well here. It is her business to justify such conduct, if she deigns to think it worth her while—we lament the ruin we see advancing; we cannot prevent it, and we do not care to partake of it. The estate is wasted, and should either my brother or I survive my Lord, which, besides the great difference in his age and ours, is still more improbable now that his health will run no risks, we could reap very little advantage

indeed, infinite trouble certainly; and perhaps we have reasons for doubting whether even the small remainder, which naturally ought to come to one or other of us, would not be intercepted. Can it be expected that we will send our private fortunes after that of our family? In one word, all we can do is to watch over my Lord's person and to take care that every attention of humanity and tenderness be paid to him, and that his unfortunate life may be made as comfortable as possible. The recovery of his senses is, I fear, hopeless; his constitution is robust, and his health perfectly good. The physical people that attend him say he may live these forty years.

"My dear Sir, I will make you no excuse for these tedious details; it would be doubting what I am so certain of, your attachment to our family. My time passes in the most melancholy and fatiguing details. We see nothing but physicians, stewards, lawyers, and creditors of the family. We must hear claims and complaints, though we cannot redress them. We must listen to what the world says, and we must guard even against opposite censures. People will give us advice, even unasked—and some, only to condemn us for not taking it, or to draw us into scrapes by following it. After every repeated trial whether we could do any good, we are reduced to the necessity, and that a difficult one, of disengaging ourselves from taking any part. My brother's temper, constitution, and his own affairs, make it impossible for him to go through all this fatigue. I, almost as warm, have more command of myself, and though with less strength, have more patience and resolution. I offered to undertake the whole, if Lady Orford, the law, and my own security, could have indemnified

me. All discourage me. I *must* disembarrass myself, and wait with fortitude and composure, as I have long done, after leaving nothing undone to retrieve it, to see the shipwreck of my family brought on inadvertently, and my mistaken love for it by the best and wisest of men, pushed on by a thoughtless man, who I doubt not only is, but always was, mad. I say nothing of the woman, who, though the source of all, was originally to be pitied, by being forced into our family against her will—I wish the interests of her son had reconciled her to it. Nay, I would excuse her entirely, if she would but come over and do, or try to do, all she can for him. Let her return to Italy after she has done it, or finds it vain to endeavour. She is unpardonable if she sits still, wrapping herself up in a resolution of giving herself no trouble, of putting herself to no expense, of risking no inconvenience to her health, which, being subject to an asthma only, is not in danger. My good Sir, hint this to her from yourself; suggest to her that the world will condemn her if she makes *no* essay, and represent to her that, however short her stay, it is a tribute that would satisfy decency—but I have done, though my mind is so full!"

Walpole finding no help from any of the family, begged the Earl of Upper Ossory for advice:

"My dear Lord, I must ask your counsel even about my own counsellors, and I will beg it by return of the post. Brief, may I trust Mr. B.? I am advised to let him sell Lord Orford's horses in this July meeting; and his mares, fillies, etc., in October. He says he must pay for their keeping. He did tell Lord O.'s solicitor that he reckoned the whole would fetch £4,000. T'other day I got him to give me a rough sketch of the value of each, and it amounted

in all but to £2,000. This frightens me. I dare not beg you to take the trouble of talking to him, unless you should be there in July, and it came in naturally. He sold Stoic for 500 guineas, but with what he has paid, he makes a balance against us of near £300. All this so alarming that I am afraid to go on. I dare not run risks either for Lord Orford or for myself. No soul will meddle but I; but, if I cannot trust the agents, I know no harm of Mr. B., but I do not know him. It will be the utmost kindness, and shall be an inviolable secret whatever you are so good as to say to me. The little strength I had is so shattered with the last bout, that I find this ocean of business overwhelms me. I venture my health to do my duty to this poor man, who has ruined himself, and is abandoned. His mother will not contribute a shilling—everybody is plundering him. To take out the Statute would throw away his places, and without it, what security have I? If the agents are not upright, dare I proceed? Should you see B., will you hint my difficulties? They are not suspicions, but common caution. Forgive me this liberty. I never wanted friendship more, for I never wanted courage so much."

Again Walpole besought the intercession of Sir Horace Mann with the Earl's mother:

"It grieves me much to find Lady Orford has so much repugnance to the journey hither, which indeed would be advisable on her own account, as well as most necessary to her son. It is not proper to tell a mother directly that her interest is concerned, in case she should have the misfortune to lose him; but as such an accident may happen, I believe, if he died without a will, her Ladyship would be heir to a great part of his *personal* estate, which

I doubt will suffer much by her absence; for I must repeat that I am determined not to meddle with my Lord's pecuniary interests, which are much confused, and which, do the best we could, would only subject us to ill-natured reflections. Her Ladyship's agents, both for her sake and her son's, are the most proper persons to undertake that direction; but it can only be done in the present situation by her Ladyship's verbal authority—she has only the authority of a mother, and the entire submission of the family to her pleasure. A legal act she cannot execute, but under what her Ladyship must wish to avoid as much as we do, a Commission of Lunacy. Compassion, humanity, tenderness, pride, hope, all make us dread such a step—and were it taken, the Court of Chancery would undoubtedly not vest the care of her son in her Ladyship unless she came to England; in her hands alone we wish to see that trust deposited. To avoid that extremity, we presumed to press her Ladyship to come over. If that could not be obtained, we offered with the utmost deference to obey implicitly any orders she should please to give us. If we must go farther and tender our advice, we think her Ladyship's agents the proper persons to supervise my Lord's affairs, and to report them to her. The superintendence of his person and health, with the advice of his physicians and relations, we will cheerfully and most tenderly undertake.

"These things, my dear Sir, I beg you to represent most respectfully to Lady Orford; and I think it due to her in justice to give her a hint of her own personal interest, which no other consideration than justice should induce me to suggest; as it would not be honest in me, when she does me the honour to repose any trust in me, not to mention it. I must

for like reasons inform her Ladyship that, among other motives of aversion to a Commission of Lunacy, one is, that my Lord's posts under the Government would probably be taken from him ; which on his recovery would not be so easily recovered as they were bestowed. I wish, alas ! I could give her Ladyship better hopes of such amendment, but am sorry to let her know that the physicians have little expectation of it. Lord Orford has sometimes good intervals, but relapses so often, that they, from experience in such vicissitudes, conclude he is likely to continue in that alternate state.

"I will say no more now, because as I am flattered with the hopes of a letter from her Ladyship herself in a few days, and shall then probably have occasion to trouble her again, I will wait till I can speak with more foundation. Having submitted myself to her Ladyship's directions, I must hope she will e'er this have given some ; and it is from that deference that I have refused to take the least upon me before I receive them, though I hear the physicians wish we would give them authority to use more restraint, an ill occasion having been taken by some of his friends to visit, and even once to carry him into company, extremely with the disapprobation of his physicians.

"My brother has seen this letter, and approves it. I must beg you to keep it, as I have not the time to copy it, though it may be necessary hereafter, if we should be censured for remissness."

Walpole was indeed unhappy. He was by no means a fool, and though he had little experience of business or law, he was quite capable of grappling with mundane matters when put to it, but he hated to have anything to do with them ; it was agony to him. "All

HORACE WALPOLE.
After Hone.

Lord Orford's affairs are devolved upon me, because nobody else will undertake the office," he told William Mason. "I am selling his horses and buying off his matches. I live in town to hear of mortgages and annuities, and do not wonder Titus was called the delight of mankind, for he put *the Jews* to the sword. Mr. Manners, who was the son of Lord William, who was the son of Beelzebub, deserves to be crucified. He was so obliging the other day to make me a visit, and tell me he should seize the pictures at Houghton —I sent for a lawyer to exorcise him. My dear Sir, what vicissitudes have I seen in my family! I seem to live upon a chessboard; every other step is black or white. A nephew mad and ruined; a niece a princess; Houghton, the envy of England, last week Mr. Vernon, the jockey, offered to vouchsafe to live in it, if he might have the care of the game. You do not think, I believe, that I need hear sermons—I have moralities enough at my elbow. The only shaft that pierces me deep is the apprehension of losing the tranquillity I had so sedulously planned for the close of my life. To be connected with Courts or Inns of Courts is equally poison. To trifle here was my whole wish. My little castle was finished, I was out of Parliament, and temperance had given me her honour that, being as unsubstantial as a sylph, I should be immortal. I would as soon put my trust in Lady Selina Huntingdon. I have been six months in purgatory with the gout; another's ambition has engrafted me upon Sandford's genealogical tree, and I must converse with stewards and moneychangers in the Temple every term. Here is a Hieroglyphic Tale with a witness." Everything was left to him by his brother, Edward, and his uncle, Lord Walpole.

"The whole family is happy that I will sacrifice myself to this duty, and everybody approves my conduct," he moaned. "I will say to you that I have but too much reason to think that neither Lord Orford nor a distant view to my own interest call upon me, or even Sir Edward who is nearer, to thrust ourselves into an invidious situation. We have been told by one that ought to know that my Lord has disinherited us both—indeed, I have the less repugnance for that very reason. My behaviour can then be influenced only by duty. I was a very untractable nephew myself; but I will be a just uncle, though my uncle was not so." His accounts of his troubles, even though the cause of them were so serious, can scarcely be read without a smile. "When my mind reposes a little, I smile at myself. I intended to trifle out the remnant of my days; and lo! they are invaded by lawyers, stewards, physicians, and jockeys!" he lamented to Mann. "Yes, this whole week past I have been negotiating a sale of race-horses at Newmarket, and, to the honour of my transactions, the sale has turned out greatly. My Gothic ancestors are forgotten; I am got upon the turf. I give orders about game, dispark Houghton, have plans of farming, vend colts, fillies, bullocks, and sheep, and have not yet confounded terms nor ordered pointers to be turned to grass. I read the part of the newspapers I used to skip, and peruse the list of sweepstakes; not the articles of intelligence, nor the relations of the shows at Portsmouth for the King, or at Oxford for the Viceroy North. I must leave Europe and its Kings and Queens to you; we do not talk to such folks at the Inns of Court. I sold Stoic for five hundred guineas. I shall never get five

pence by the monarchs of the empire, and therefore we jockeys of the Temple, and we lawyers of Newmarket, hold them to be very insignificant individuals." Perhaps, after all, Walpole derived some pleasure from his misery.

Walpole journeyed to Houghton, and was much distressed by the state of the family seat. "I found a scene infinitely more mortifying than I expected; though I certainly did not go with a prospect of finding a land flowing with milk and honey," he confided, in August, to the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway. "Except the pictures, which are in the finest preservation, and the woods, which are become forests, all the rest is ruin, desolation, confusion, disorder, debts, mortgages, sales, pillage, villainy, waste, folly, and madness. I do not believe that five thousand pounds would put the house and buildings into good repair. The nettles and brambles in the park are up to your shoulders, horses have been turned into the garden, and banditti lodged in every cottage. The perpetuity of livings that come up to the park-pales have been sold—and every farm let for half its value. In short, you know how much family pride I have, and consequently may judge how much I have been mortified! Nor do I tell you half, or *near* the worst circumstances. I have just stopped the torrent—and that is all. I am very uncertain whether I must not fling up the trust; and some of the difficulties in my way seem insurmountable, and too dangerous not to alarm even my zeal; since I must not ruin myself, and hurt those for whom I feel, too, only to restore a family that will end with myself, and to retrieve an estate from which I am not likely ever to receive the least advantage."

He was as he said pathetically, "forced to act as if my mind was not only perfectly at ease, but as if I, who never understood one useful thing in my days, was master of every country business, and qualified to be a surveyor-general. Though you would have pitied my sensations, you would have smiled, Madam, I am sure, at my occupations, which lasted without interruption from nine every morning till twelve at night, except that a few times I stole from the steward and lawyer I carried with me, to peep at a room full of painters, who you and Lord Ossory will like to hear, are making drawings from the whole collection, which Boydell is going to engrave. Well, this morning was spent in visiting the kennels, in giving away pointers, greyhounds, and foreign beasts, in writing down genealogies of horses—with all my heraldry I never thought to be the Anstis of Newmarket; in selling bullocks, sheep, Shetland horses, and all kind of stock; in hearing petitions and remonstrances of old servants, whom I pitied, though three were drunk by the time I had breakfasted; in listening to advice on raising leases, in ordering repairs, sending two teams to Lynn for titles, in limiting expense of coals, candles, soap, brushes, etc., and in forty other such details."

At the beginning of the next year, 1774, the physicians began to hold out hopes of Lord Orford's early recovery. Walpole could see no change of it; he told the Countess of Upper Ossory that his nephew persists in only whispering, is impatient of all contradiction, can only with difficulty be kept from wine, and thinks of nothing but his dogs and horses, which the physicians are afraid of telling him have gone. "My anxiety, instead of being lessened, is doubled," he continues. "I dare not

contradict the faculty, who, I fear, have been rash. I dread a relapse ; I dread still more the consequences of a sudden release. The physicians have said he is so well, that all his acquaintance are pouring in upon him, and yet I am told I must keep him quiet and admit nobody. My whole time is employed in sending messages to his house ; while everyone gives me different advice, and expects I should attend to every contrariety. . . ."

Lord Orford was not a popular person. "The fourteenth of this month is fixed for Lord Orford's perfect restoration to his senses," George Selwyn wrote in February to Lord Carlisle. "They cannot detain him any longer ! He talks of going abroad, which I am glad to hear, because some mischief he will do, I make no doubt, and I had rather it was done abroad than at home. He has thanked Horry Walpole for the care which he has taken of his affairs, but approves of nothing which he has done. I think Horry's situation is not to be envied. He particularly finds fault with the sale of the horses." Lord Orford was anything but grateful to Walpole, and spoke to him in such a way as to make his uncle declare that it excused further attendance on his part and must dispense with his taking charge again, should there be a relapse. So upset was he that he burst out into philosophy : "One must do what is right without reward," he said, "nor am I of an age to take disappointments to heart. To do right, and be at peace, is enough ; nay, is not doing right being at peace ? Kings may die, and men may be mad, can one save them or cure them ? Shall one not enjoy one's own little lot because inevitable events come to pass ?"

The next fifteen years, from 1774 to 1789, were

uneventful. He followed the daily round he had prescribed for himself. He was nearly sixty at the beginning of this period, and such energy as he had was waning. However, happily, he continued his correspondence with unabated vigour. "By age and situation at this time of the year I live with nothing but old women," he wrote from Strawberry Hill, in September 1774. "They do very well for me who have little choice left, and who prefer common nonsence to wise nonsence—the only difference I know between old women and old men. I am out of all politics, and never think of elections, which I think I should hate even if I loved politics; just as if I loved tapestries, I do not think I could talk over the manufacture of worsteds. Books I have almost done with; at least, read only such as nobody else would read. In short, my way of life is too insipid to entertain anybody but myself; and though I am always employed, I must own I think I have given up everything in the world only to be busy about the most arrant trifles." This is about as good a description of his life at this time as anything could be.

Walpole had, in 1773, written a little fairy comedy, *Nature will Prevail*, which five years later was played with considerable success at the Haymarket Theatre; but he was more interested in his press at Strawberry Hill than in his pen.

"Do you know it would be a charity to send me something to print, or to tell me what I shall print?" he wrote to the Rev. William Mason, in July, 1774. "My press is at a dead stand, and I would fain employ it while I may, without permission of a licencer, for though it has always been as harmless as if it was

under the cannon of Sion Hill, it would be *vocal no more*, if it might only utter Dutch Bibles, or editions in *usum Delphini*. I know you have twenty things in your *portefeuille*. I will print as few copies as you please. I have no ambition of serving or amusing the public, and think of nothing but diverting myself and the few I love. What signifies taking the trouble to be put, I don't know how soon, into an *Index Expurgatorius*! To-day is ours; let us enjoy it. . . . Excuse me, but I cannot take your advice, nor intend to print any more for the public. When I offer you my press it is most selfishly, and to possess your writings, for I would only print a few copies for your friends and mine. My last volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting* has long been finished, and as a debt shall some time or other be published, but there I take leave of Messieurs the readers."

Mason and Walpole had been brought in touch through the former's biography of Thomas Gray, and the correspondence that then started was continued for many years. It was subsequently collected, and published by Mitford in 1851. Unfortunately, as so often happened in the case of Walpole and his friends, there came a breach. Both men were Whigs; but Walpole thought that the other was going too far when he took an active part in the agitation which began in 1780 with the Yorkshire petition for retrenchment and reform. Walpole's remonstrances being without effect, the friendship rapidly cooled. So intimate, however, were they at one time that Walpole, in 1783, made to the clergyman his simple confession of religious faith:

"When I am in so grave a strain, I will pass to the latter part of your letter before I reply to other

passages in the former part. You amaze me by even supposing that the epitaph I sent you could allude to the immortality of the soul. Believe me, I think it is as serious a subject as you do; nor, I am sure, did you ever hear me treat it lightly. The three last lines, which justly offended you, if you so interpreted them, were intended to laugh at the absurd idea of the beatified sitting on golden thrones, and chanting eternal allelujahs to golden harps. When men ascribe their own puerile conceptions to the Almighty Author of all things, what do they but prove that their visions are of human invention? What can be more ridiculous than to suppose that Omnipotent Goodness and Wisdom created, and will select, the most virtuous of its creatures to sing His praises to all eternity?—it is an idea that I should think could never have entered but into the head of a king, who might delight to have his courtiers sing Birthday Odes for ever.

"Pray be assured that I never trifle on so solemn and dear an interest as the immortality of the soul; though I do not subscribe to every childish and fantastic employment that silly people have chalked out for it. There is no word in any language expressive enough for the adoration and gratitude we owe to the Author of all good! An eternity of praises and thanks is due to Him; but are we to infer that *that* is the sole tribute in which He will delight, and the sole occupation He destines for beings on whom He has bestowed thought and reason? The epitaph did not deserve half a line to be said on it; but your criticism, indeed, your misconception of it, will excuse my saying so much in my own justification. It is no irreligion to smile at a chorister's notions of Para-

dise. Perhaps I, on my side, may have misunderstood you too—forgive me if I have; but you do not seem so serious on the tragedy you have been writing as I wish you were. I shall be glad if you were in earnest."

Walpole went to France in August 1775, and his first visitor was, almost as a matter of course, Madame du Deffand. "I have found my dear old woman so well, and looking so much better," he told the Countess of Ailesbury. "Madame du Deffand came to see me the instant I arrived, and sat by me whilst I stripped and dressed myself; for, as she said, since she cannot see, there was no harm in my being stark. She was charmed with my arrival, that she did not think of it a moment. I sat with her till half an hour after two in the morning, and had a letter from her before my eyes were open again. In short, her soul is immortal, and forces her body to bear it company."

He was warmly received. The Maréchales of Luxembourg and Mirepoix came to Paris to see him, and he was embraced by the Duchesse de la Vallière —"I am smeared with red, like my own crest the Saracen, and in short, have been so kissed on both cheeks, that had they become as large as Madame de Virri's, they would have lost leather." He did not go to the marriage ceremony of Madame Clotilde, or even to the banquet. "I husband my pleasures and my person, and do not expose my wrinkles *au grand jour*." He did, however, limp to the *bal paré*, and was placed on the *banc des ambassadeurs*, just behind the royal family. He lost his heart to the Queen. "What I have to say I can tell your Ladyship in a word, for it was impossible to see anything but the Queen!" he wrote to the Countess of Upper

Ossory. "Hebes and Floras, and Helens and Graces are street-walkers to her. She is a statue of beauty, when standing or sitting; grace itself when she moves. She was dressed in silver, scattered over with *laurier-roses*, few diamonds, and feathers, much lower than the Monument. They say she does not dance in time, but then it is wrong to dance in time."

Walpole, who was in the midst of things, pokes fun at himself: "Avez-vous lu les deux Eloges?" he asked the Countess of Upper Ossory. "Ah! mon Dieu, le petit Cossé est mort, c'est une désolation! Monsieur de Clermont qui vient de perdre sa femme! —eh bien, Madame! et Monsieur Chamboneau qui doit reprender la sienne—mais c'est affreux. Apropos, on dit qu'on vient de nommer deux dames à Madame Elizabeth! si je le sçais! bon, ne voilà-t-il pas que je viens de me faire écrire chez Madame de Roncherolles! soupez-vous par hasard chez Madame de la Reinière?

"This is the quintessence, Madam, of the present state of Paris, Sept. 9th, 1775, a quarter before twelve in the forenoon; and if you receive my letter within a week, you may boast of having the freshest and most fashionable intelligence of what was said last night at half an hour after eight in one of the first houses in this capital: not that your Ladyship has much claim on my punctuality; I have been here three weeks this blessed day, and you have taken no more notice of me than if I was in Siberia, and were gone out of fashion instead of in. Remember I am out of your jurisdiction, Madam, and that *mon cœur* is assailed like *Cithère assiégée*, the subject of the present Opera. Lord! how I could brag if I would. Madame de B. told me last night that I

had made the *conquête* of her daughter-in-law, la Comtesse Émile. I am going to drink tea with her under a *bosquet de plumes* this evening, in the mother's English garden at Auteuil; and I am to sup at St. Ouen with Madame Necker, who is reckoned to have condescended more towards me than to any *bel esprit* or *philosophe* since the days of David Hume. It is true I have hurt myself by speaking a little irreverently of Monsieur Thomas, and by laughing when she told me that Nossuet and the writers under Louis Quatorze had only opened the channels of eloquence which the authors of the present age have made into a perfect bason—but I am always kicking down the pail of my fortune by some indiscretion or other! Well! they are a charming people, and I cannot think of leaving them yet. In England I fancied I was within a furlong of threescore; but it is so English to grow old! The French are Strudbrugs improved. After ninety they have no more caducity or distempers, but set out on a new career. Madame du Deffand and I set out last Sunday at seven in the evening to go fifteen miles to a ball, and came back after supper; and another night, because it was but one in the morning when she brought me home, she ordered the coachman to make the tour of the Quais, and drive gently because it was so early." A little later, Madame du Deffand was ill—Walpole suggests a surfeit of strawberries and cream after supper; and he remained until she had recovered, arriving in England in the middle of October, and very happy he was on the whole, as he said, to have "returned to my own Lares et Penates—to my dogs and cats."

Five years later, Madame du Deffand died, whereupon he wrote to the Countess of Upper Ossory on

November 1st (1780): "Without entering on too melancholy a detail, recollect, Madam, that I have outlived most of those to whom I was habituated, Lady Hervey, Lady Suffolk, Lady Blandford—my dear old friend, I should probably never have seen again—yet that is a deeper loss, indeed! She has left me all her MSS.—a compact between us—in one word, I had, at her earnest requests, consented to accept them, on condition she should leave me nothing else. She had, indeed, intended to leave me her little all, but I declared I would never set foot in Paris again (this was ten years ago) if she did not engage to retract that destination. To satisfy her, I at last agreed to accept her papers, and one thin gold box with the portrait of her dog. I have written to beg her dog itself, which is so cross, that I am sure nobody else would treat it well; and I have ordered her own servant, who read all letters to her, to pick out all the letters of living persons, and restore them to the several writers without my seeing them." Tonton reached Strawberry Hill safely. "I told you in my last that Tonton was arrived," he wrote to Henry Seymour Conway. "I brought him this morning to take possession of his new villa, but his inauguration has not been at all pacific. As he has already found out that he may be as despotic as at Saint Joseph's, he began by exiling my beautiful little cat, upon which, however, we shall not quite agree. He then flew at one of my dogs, who returned it by biting his foot till it bled, but was severely beaten for it. I immediately rung for Margaret to dress his foot; but in the midst of my tribulation could not keep my countenance, for she cried, 'Poor little thing, he does not understand my language!' I hope she will not recollect, too, that he is a Papist!"

Two days later, in reply to a letter from Conway, he added: "You have mistaken Tonton's sex, who is a cavalier, and a little of the *mousquetaire* still; but if I do not correct his vivacities, at least I shall not encourage them like my dear old friend."

Chapter X

AN INDIAN SUMMER

SOMETIME in the winter of 1787-1788, Walpole met the two Misses Berry at the house of Lady Herries, wife of the banker of St. James's Street. As from this time until his death some nine years later they played a great part in his life, something more than a cursory mention of them is essential.

Mary Berry was born in 1763, and her sister Agnes in the following year. Their grand-uncle was a Scotsman, named Ferguson, who came to London in 1709, and amassed a fortune, computed at £300,000. He purchased an estate at Raith, in Fifeshire; but remained faithful to his business, and, in fact, died in the dwelling-house over his offices in Broad Street. He married Miss Townshend, sister of Joseph Townshend, Member of Parliament for Westbury, in the county of Wiltshire; but having no issue, his natural heirs were the sons of his sister, who had married one Berry. Of this union, there were two sons, Robert and William. In 1762 Robert married Elizabeth, daughter of John Seton, of the ancient Scottish family of Seton of Arbroath. There were two girls of the marriage, but the wife died in 1767 in giving birth to a third child, which did not survive her. Ferguson was anxious to have a male heir. "I have been told that his uncle was very importunate with my

father to marry again directly," Mary Berry has recorded. "If so, I am sure my father must have finally destroyed his prospects from him, by the manner in which he would have received such a proposal immediately after the untimely death of a beloved wife of three-and twenty after four year's marriage." Robert, who, his daughter says, was of an "easy, inefficient character," did not find favour in his uncle's eyes. Business interested him not at all: it did, however, interest his brother, William, and Ferguson in 1769 informed Robert that, while he continued to make him an allowance of £500 a year, he intended to make William Berry his heir. When Ferguson died in 1781, at the fine old age of ninety-three, he left the bulk of his fortune to William; but bequeathed to Robert a capital of £10,000, the income from which was increased by William, who settled on his brother an annuity of £1,000 a year. Robert, with his fifteen hundred or so of income, took his daughters abroad, and with them visited Holland, Switzerland, Italy, and France.

"At Florence was our first stop; and here for the first time I began to feel my situation, and how entirely dependent I was on my own resources for my conduct, respectability, and success," Mary Berry wrote in her "Notes of Early Life". "My father, with the odd inherent easiness of his character, had since my mother's death entirely abandoned the world and all his early acquaintance in it, entirely forgetting that on him now depended the success and the happiness of his two motherless daughters. I soon found that I had to lead those who ought to have led me; that I must be a protecting mother, instead of a gay companion to my sister; and to my father a guide and monitor, instead of finding in him a tutor and

protector. Strongly impressed as I was that honour, truth, and virtue were the only roads to happiness, and that the love and consideration of my fellow-creatures, and the society in which I was to live, depended entirely upon my own conduct and exertions, the whole powers of my mind were devoted to doing always what I thought right and knew would be *safe*, without a consideration of what I knew would be agreeable, while I had at the same time the most lively sense of everything that was brilliant and distinguished, and the greatest desire to distinguish myself. Add to this, the most painfully quick feelings, and a necessity for the support of some kind, sympathising mind, and it is easy to imagine how little I could profit by all the advantages nature had given me, but how little I could have enjoyed of the thoughtless gaiety and lightheartedness of youth."

The story of the beginning of the famous intimacy has been recorded in a letter, dated October 11th, 1788, to the Countess of Upper Ossory. "If I have picked up no recent anecdotes on our Common, I have made a much more, to me, precious acquisition. It is the acquaintance of two young ladies of the name of Berry, whom I first saw last winter, and who accidentally took a house here with their father for the season. Their story is singular enough to entertain you. The grandfather, a Scot, had a large estate in his own country, £5,000 a year it is said: and a circumstance I shall tell you makes it probable. The eldest son married for love a woman with no fortune. The old man was enraged and would not see him. The wife died and left these two young ladies. Their grandfather wished for an heir-male, and pressed the widower to re-marry,

MARY AND AGNES BERRY.
After Zoffany.

but could not prevail, the son declaring that he would consecrate to his daughters and their education. The old man did not break with him again, but, much worse, totally disinherited him and left all to his second son, who very handsomely gave up £800 a year to his elder brother. Mr. Berry has since carried his daughters for two or three years to France and Italy, and they are returned the best-informed and the most perfect creatures I ever saw at their age. They are exceedingly sensible, entirely natural and unaffected, frank, and being qualified to talk on any subject, nothing is so easy and agreeable as their conversation, nor more apposite than their answers and observations. The eldest, I discovered by chance, understands Latin, and is a perfect Frenchwoman in her language. The younger draws charmingly, and has copied admirably Lady Di's gipsies, which I lent, though for the first time of her attempting colours. They are of pleasing figures; Mary, the eldest, sweet with fine dark eyes, that are very lively when she speaks, with a symmetry of face that is the more interesting from being pale; Agnes, the younger, has an agreeable sensible countenance, hardly to be called handsome, but almost. She is no less animated than Mary, but seems out of deference to her sister to speak seldomer, for they dote on each other, and Mary is always praising her sister's talents. I must even tell you they dress within the bounds of fashion, though fashionably; but without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons. In short, good sense, information, simplicity, and ease characterise the Berrys; and this is not particularly mine, who am apt to be prejudiced, but the universal voice of all who know them. The first night I met them I would

not be acquainted with them, having heard so much in their praise that I concluded they would be all pretension. The second time, in a very small company, I sat next to Mary, and found her an angel both inside and out. Now I do not know which I like best, except Mary's face, which is formed for a sentimental novel, but is ten times fitter for a fifty times better thing, genteel comedy. This delightful family comes to me almost every Sunday, as our region is too *proclamatory* to play at cards on the seventh day. I do not care a straw for cards, but I do disapprove of this partiality to the youngest child of the week; while the other six poor days are treated as if they had no souls to save. I forgot to tell you that Mr. Berry is a little merry man with a round face, and you would not suspect of so much feeling and attachment."

Walpole was then in his seventy-second year, and the girls were twenty-five and twenty-four respectively. He revelled in their company. He called them his "twin wives" and "my beloved spouses". When he was away from them, he referred to his "disconsolate widowhood", and he subscribed himself in his letters "Horace Fondlewives." Mary was "Suavissima Maria", Agnes, "my sweet lamb." He wrote humorously on June 23rd, 1789, to his "dear both": "I passed so many evenings of the last fortnight with you, that I almost preferred it to our two honeymoons, and consequently am the more sensible to the deprivation; and how dismal was *Sunday* evening, compared to those of last autumn. If you both felt as I do, we might surpass *any* event in the annals of Dunmow. Oh! what a prodigy it would be if a husband and *two* wives should present themselves and demand the flitch of bacon, on swearing

that not one of the three in a year and a day wished to be unmarried. For my part, I know that my affection has done nothing but increase; though were there but one of you, I should be ashamed of being so strongly attached at my age; being in love with both, I glory in my passion, and think it a proof of my sense. Why should not two affirmatives make a negative, as well as the reverse? and then a double love will be wisdom—for what is wisdom in reality but a negative? It exists but by correcting folly; and when it has peevishly prevailed on us to abstain from something we have a mind to, it gives itself airs, and in action pretends to be a personage, a nonentity set up for a figure of importance! It is the case of most of those phantoms called virtues, which, by smothering vices, claim a reward as thief-takers. Do you know I have partiality for drunkenness, though I never practised it: it is a reality; but what is sobriety, only the absence of drunkenness. However, *mes chères femmes*, I make a difference between men and woman, and do not extend my doctrine to your sex. Everything is excusable in us, but nothing in you. And pray remember that I will not lose my flitch of bacon—though."

Mary Berry was unquestionably his favourite, but he was careful never to slight Agnes. "But now I must talk of family affairs," he wrote to them on June 30th, 1789. "I am delighted that my next letter is to come from wife the second. I love her as much as you, and I am sure you like that I should. I should not love either so much, if your affection for each other were not so mutual; I observe and watch all your ways and doings, and the more I observe you, the more virtues I discover in both—nay, depend upon it, if I discover a fault you shall

hear of it. You came too perfect into my hands, to let you be spoilt by indulgence. All the world admires you, yet you have contracted no vanity, advertised no pretensions, are simple and good as nature made you, in spite of all your improvements—mind *you* and *yours* are always, from lips and pen, of what grammarians call the *common of two* and signify *both*—so I shall repeat that memorandum no more."

For the girls he wrote, at their request, his "Reminiscences of the Courts of George I and George II", and to to them he dedicated in 1789 his "Catalogue of Strawberry Hill". When they were away, he wrote to them constantly, letters such as only he could write. "I have received at once most kind letters from you both; too kind, for you both talk of gratitude," he protested. "Mercy on me! Which is the obliged, and which is the gainer? Two charming beings, whom everybody likes and approves, and yet can be pleased with the company and conversation and old stories of a Methusala? Or I, who at the end of my days have fallen into more agreeable society than ever I knew at any period of my life?" In his relation with the Misses Berry, Horace Walpole is seen at his best. Writing to them, his mask of cynicism dropped off: it was a charming old man doing his best to entertain two young women who might have been his daughters. It is one of the most charming incidents of his otherwise somewhat sterile career.

The *cachet* of Walpole franked them into the best and most interesting society of the day. He introduced them to the Conways, and especially to Anne Seymour Conway, better remembered under her married name of Damer, who presently became Mary

Berry's most intimate friend, and the confidante of her pathetic love-affair.

The Berry family went to Italy in the autumn of 1790, and remained abroad until September of the following year. They had written to Walpole, saying that they were returning by way of Paris, who hastened to beg them not to do so. "I am vain of my attachment to two such understandings and hearts; the cruel injustice of fortune makes me proud of trying to smooth one of her least rugged frowns; but even this theme I must drop, as you have raised a still more cruel fear," he wrote on September 18th, sending the letter so that it should reach them at Basle. "You talk uncertainly of your route thro' France or its borders, and you bid me not be alarmed! Oh! can you conjure down that apprehension! I have scarce a grain of belief in German armies marching against the French, yet what can I advise who know nothing but from the loosest reports? Oh! I shall abhor myself—yes, abhor myself! if I have drawn you from the security of Florence to the smallest risk, or even inconvenience. My dearest friends, return thither, stay there, stop in Switzerland, do anything but hazard yourselves. I beseech you, I implore you, do not venture thro' France, for tho' you may come from Italy, you have no connection of any sort on the whole Continent, you may meet with incivilities and trouble, which even pretty women, that are no politicians, may be exposed to in a country so unsettled as France is at present. If there is truth in my soul, it is that I would give up all my hopes of seeing you again, rather than have you venture on the least danger of any sort. When a storm could terrify me out of my sense last year, do you think,

dearest souls, that I can have peace till I am sure of your safety? and to risk it for me! Oh! horrible! I cannot bear the idea!"

Walpole was, indeed, terribly worried about this route. "I saw that he was all impatience and bursting with something he wanted to say to me," Mrs. Damer wrote from Strawberry Hill to the Berrys. "She had scarcely shut the door when his face changed, and with an expression of much concern he told me that you were to come through France. On my trying to comfort him, and saying what I really *now* in a great measure think, he quite hurt me by suddenly checking himself and saying, 'that one had better keep one's ideas and anxieties to oneself,' or [words] to that effect. I am sure if partaking them gives a right I have as good a right as himself. This, you will guess did not last, but I see that *reason* will not do; it is the very thing he cannot bear, and were I to persist, he would only bottle up all anxieties and grievances and render their qualities ten times more pernicious by confinement. I mean, therefore, for these six weeks to come, to indulge him in his own way, keeping, however, as much as possible, alarms from him, and giving where I can the most probable turn to reports to quiet his mind.

"He then talked of you in the most touching manner, fetched your last letter, and told me, with much regret, what he had said to you, seemed both hurt and charmed at you having a society you prefer, and a country you like, and returning for him alone. He had not, I find, the most notion of your passing the *'can's'* and I wish you had not told him so soon of your *intention*, which he has converted into a *certainty*. In short, an idea must never be started with

him, about *certain persons*, for wild fire is not quicker nor more ungovernable."

The Berrys arrived at their house in North Audley Street on November 11th, 1791, and, of course, saw Walpole at once. He was very happy when they accepted the loan of the house and gardens, Little Strawberry Hill, which had been the residence of "Kitty" Clive, from the time of her retirement from the stage in 1769 until her death sixteen years later. Thereupon, soon people cast aspersions in the newspapers upon the characters of the young women, whereupon Mary told Walpole that they could not go to the house. "I thought my age would allow me to have a friendship that consisted in nothing but distinguishing merit—you allow the vilest of all tribunals, the newspapers, to decide how short a way friendship may go!" he wrote pathetically. "Where is your good sense in this conduct? and will you punish me, because what you nor mortal being can prevent, a low anonymous scribbler pertly takes a liberty with your name? I cannot help repeating that you have hurt me!" To this, Mary Berry replied: "If our seeking your society is supposed by those ignorant of its value to be with some view beyond its enjoyment, and our situation represented as one which will aid the belief of this to a mean and interested world, I shall think we shall have perpetual reason to regret the only circumstance in our lives that could be called fortunate. Excuse the manner in which I write, and in which I feel. My sentiments on newspaper notice have long been known to you, with regard to all who have not so honourably distinguished themselves, as to feel above such feeble but venomed shafts." However, in December the family established itself at Little Strawberry Hill.

Here may be mentioned that, on the occasion of the sisters' first visit to Strawberry Hill, Walpole addressed them in these playful stanzas :

"To Mary's lips has ancient Rome
Her purest language taught,
And from the modern city home,
Agnes its pencil brought.

"Rome's ancient Horace sweetly chants
Such maids with lyric fire,
Albion's old Horace sings nor paints,
He only can admire.

"Still would his Press their fame record,
So amiable the pair is !
But, ah ! how vain to think *his* word
Can add a *straw* to Berry's."

To which Mary Berry replied :

"Had Rome's famed Horace thus addrest
His Lydia or his Lyce ;
He'd ne'er complained to him their breast
Was often cold and icy.

"But had he sought their joy t'explain,
Or praise their gen'rous bard,
Perhaps like me they'd tried in vain,
And felt the task too hard."

Sir Edward Walpole, the second son of the Prime Minister, had died on January 12th, 1784. He died, his younger brother mentions, "with the same constant tranquillity which he had preserved through his whole illness. His almost unvaried health from soon after thirty to seventy-seven, his ample fortune and unambitious temper, make his life and death rather

to be envied than lamented. His boundless benevolence and charity had left him but very moderate wealth." Sir Edward had one son, Edward, a colonel in the Army, who died young; and three daughters. Laura married Frederick Keppel, Bishop of Exeter; Maria married, firstly, James, second Earl of Waldegrave, and, secondly, William Henry, Duke of Gloucester; and Charlotte married Lionel Tollemache, Earl of Dysart. Upon this event, Walpole wrote to Mason: "I do lose fourteen hundred a year by his death, but had I reason to expect to keep it so long? I had twice been offered the reversion for my own life, and positively refused to accept it, because I would receive no obligation that might entangle my honour and my gratitude and set them at variance. I never did ask or receive a personal favour from my most intimate friends when in power, though they were too upright to have laid me under the same difficulties, and have always acted an honest uniform part; but though I love expense, I was content with a fortune far above any merit I can pretend to, and knew I should be content were it much lessened. As it would be contemptible to regret the diminution at sixty-six, there is no merit in being quite easy under the loss. But you do me honour I do not deserve in complimenting me on not loving money. I have always loved what money would purchase, which is much the same thing; and the whole of my philosophy consists in reconciling myself to buying fewer baubles for a year or two that I may live, and when the old child's baby-house is quite full of playthings." The death of his elder brother made him heir-presumptive to the Earldom of Orford.

George Walpole, third Earl of Orford, died on December 5th, 1791, and his uncle Horace Walpole

succeeded to the title—but not with a particularly good grace. He was then in his seventy-fifth year, and far from desirous of making any change in his mode of living. It was indeed some time before he could bring himself to sign "Orford", or could bear to be addressed "Your Lordship". He put his regret in verse :

Epitaphium vivi Auctoris.

"An estate and an earldom at seventy-four !
Had I sought them or wished them, t' add one fear more,
That of making a Countess when almost four-score.
But Fortune, who scatters her gifts out of season,
Though unkind to my limbs, has left me my reason ;
And, whether she lowers or lifts me, I'll try
In the plain simple style I have lived in, to die :
For ambition too humble, for meanness too high."

The succession brought him a further £3,800 of income, but, owing to the increased expenses, it is doubtful if Walpole was a penny the better off. The only possible advantage he could derive was that he could make his wife a Countess, and also could charge the estate with a jointure of £2,000 a year. But even this was more or less illusionary, for he was already in a financial position sound enough to make handsome provision for a wife.

There was talk at this time of Walpole wishing to marry Mary Berry, but it is practically certain that he never proposed to her. The supposed wish presently came to the lady's ears, and she wrote about it in a very sensible strain.

"Although," Mary Berry wrote to a friend in August 1793, "I have no doubt that Lord Orford said to Lady D. every word that she repeated to your brother—for last winter, at the time the C.'s talked

about the matter, he went about saying all this and more to frighten everybody that would hear him—but I always thought it rather to frighten and punish them than seriously wishing it himself. And why should he ?—when, without the ridicule or the trouble of marriage, he enjoys almost as much of my society, and every comfort from it, that he could in the nearest connection. As the willing offering of a grateful and affectionate heart, the time and attention I bestow upon him have hitherto given me pleasure. Were they to become a duty to which the world would attribute interested motives, they would become irksome. If the world, its meanness, its total indifference to everything but interest, in some shape or other, be assured you cannot think so badly nor so *truly* as I do. 'They best believe it who have felt it most ! "

Chapter XI

HORACE WALPOLE, FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

THE years passed uneventfully for Walpole, who was always a little "tetchy" if the Berrys were away from him, and always on the look-out for some (fancied) slight or neglect. In 1795 an event happened which, had it come to his ears, might have, indeed almost certainly would have, caused a breach, Walpole being jealous of the affections of the young woman. In that year, Mary fell in love with General Charles O'Hara, an illegitimate son of James O'Hara, second Baron Tyrawley. O'Hara, who was born about 1740, and therefore more than a score of years older than the lady, had early entered the army, and became an officer in the Coldstream Guards, which regiment his father commanded. He was aide-de-camp in Germany after the battle of Minden (1759) to Lord Granby; and went to Portugal as Quartermaster-General of the troops under Lord Tyrawley in the campaign of 1762. He served in the American War as Brigadier-General; was with Cornwallis at Yorktown, and kept prisoner until 1782, when he was exchanged. By this time he had been promoted Major-General, and given the Colonelcy of the 22nd Foot.

In Italy in the spring of 1783 he met the Berrys,

and as a friend of the Conways and of Horace Walpole was heartily welcomed by them. He was stationed at Gibraltar from 1787 to 1790. "General Sir Robert Boyd is made Governor of Gibraltar," Walpole wrote in October, 1790, to Mary Berry; "and somebody I know not whom is appointed Lieutenant-Governor in the place of your friend O'Hara—I know not how or why, but shall be sorry if he is mortified and you consequently." In another letter, February 29th, 1791, Walpole mentions him: "O'Hara is come to town, and you will love him better than ever; he persuaded the captain of the ship, whom you will love for being persuaded, to stop at Lisbon that he might see Mrs. Damer. O'Hara has been shockingly treated [in not having been made Lieutenant-Governor of Gibralter]." Three weeks later Walpole saw O'Hara, and tells Mary Berry of the meeting: "I have seen O'Hara with his face as ruddy and black and his teeth as white as ever, and as fond of you two, and as grieved as anybody—but I. He has got a better regiment." The better regiment was the 74th Highlanders, which, being on the Indian establishment, was a more lucrative post. O'Hara became Lieutenant-Governor of Gibraltar in 1792; and in September of the following year, having been promoted Lieutenant-General, went as Governor to Toulon. "If it can be preserved," Walpole to Mary Berry, "he will keep it." Toulon had surrendered to the English at the end of August, when Admiral Lord Hood took possession of it in the name of Louis XVIII; but, after the new Commandant had taken up his duties, on November 23rd, it was attacked and recaptured by Napoleon. O'Hara was taken prisoner, and kept in the Luxembourg until August, 1795, when he was exchanged for General

Rochambeau. Shortly after O'Hara's return to England, he went to Cheltenham, where the Berrys were staying. "I am delighted that you have got O'Hara," Walpole wrote to the elder sister, September 1st, 1795. "How he must feel his felicity in being at liberty to rove about as much as he likes. Still, I shall not admire his volatility if he quits you."

As a matter of fact, when Walpole wrote the above letter, Mary Berry and Charles O'Hara were engaged, but the engagement was kept a secret from everyone but Mrs. Damer.

The situation, however, was very difficult. Mary Berry may have been impressionable; but certainly she was not responsive, and Mrs. Damer was at pains to warn her not unduly to conceal her feelings from her lover. "Would I could know something of you!—Taylor, on my Mother's saying at dinner, that she wondered she had not heard from O'H[ara], said that he had met him yesterday as he came from London, where he had been riding to town," Mrs. Damer wrote to Mary Berry, October 3rd, 1795. "It is more than probable that he had been with you and *possible* that all is yet where it was, and that you had no opportunity for any explanation,—but when you are yourself in town, I think you will see him in some greater degree of liberty, for I know how doubt and uncertainty in whatever but moderately interests and affects your mind, and how glad you are at any risk to shake them off. 'Tis, I think, unfortunate that he is likely so soon, as perhaps he may be, to be employed on service that will call from hence; a little more time might allow sentiments that may be but half understood by him to acquire strength, tho' he has long known you, and you say

does really know your character, yet from circumstances and the disposition of your affectionate heart towards him, all takes now a very different cast between you, yet his prejudices and *'crotchets'*, tho' losing ground perhaps daily, may still form a barrier and prevent him coming to a determination that would constitute all his own future happiness in life. If this is otherwise, I need not say how much a speedy decision is desirable, for I quite dread the influence of an anxiety I, God knows! feel *for* you, and *with* you, on your mind."

Behind Mary Berry's attitude was her fear of hurting Horace Walpole; but Mrs. Damer, it is to be hoped, was more correct when she said that Walpole, when the position was put to him frankly, would behave in the most correct manner.

THE HON. MRS. DAMER TO MARY BERRY.

"Park Place, October 6th, 1795.

"Your account is so much what I expected that you need not have *thought* how to give me a clear idea of all that has passed, but tho' it has not *surprised*, it has much affected me. Anxious Heaven knows, I still remain, yet I can scarcely entertain a doubt in what manner and with what determination your next conversation must end. He would not trust himself again or come to you to *confirm* scruples and combat a passion he sees you less than disapprove. For those *scruples*, indeed, and ideal ridicules, I chiefly read doubts of the strength and constancy of your sentiments for him and fears of *a woman*, tho' his reason and judgement, as well as his heart,

whisper to him how very superior *such a woman* is to those with whom he has hitherto been connected, in any way. You know my confidence in Truth and Virtue, on a near view they cannot be mistaken by a noble mind and an affectionate heart. Once united, therefore, *your* character must inspire him with perfect security on all rational subjects, and *other subjects* will find their excuse in a heart like yours. Your kind affection does not escape me, in your endeavouring, and that at such a moment, to influence O'Hara in my favour, alas! But of that I shall say nothing, nothing of myself. I have, I need not tell *you*, put *that self* out of the question, as it well ought to be where the future happiness of my other and far dearer self is at stake. Indeed, I have as yet been too much occupied with anxiety for you to have cast more than a few vague thoughts that way. That your sister should suspect *nothing* seems to me marvellous; for your Father I do not wonder. Lord Or[ford] does not *choose* to see, and none, they say, so blind. But all this *blindness* I think impertinent. *Esto.*—You must, my only friend, think for yourself, act for yourself, and, as others do (tho' not indeed *just as* they do) seek your own comfort and happiness. A long, long score is owing you of both. Lord Or[ford], when he is told this, will take it with composure, depend on it; and I almost hope the whole of that will be less painful than you imagine. We sometimes make mountains to ourselves which on nearer view lose their tremendous appearance, and we smile at our own fears. He cannot, after all, but wish your good and advantage, and *cannot* think them to be comprised within the narrow limits his age, infirmities and rooted habits have prescribed to himself, or that for *his life* (at all ages an uncertain period) you should

devote the best years to come of yours, and throw by better hopes and better views, if such should offer. Ag[nes], you are well aware, would not refuse an engagement she liked for herself, and therefore would not seriously object to your using the same liberty. Indeed, on a little reflection—it may perhaps require that with her—she is too noble, and loves you too much not to wish you were it but a chance of happiness, and I am well convinced that in the end she would on this occasion have a much better chance for her own. For your Father, I say nothing, 'its unnecessary. He could but be gratified by such an union. Farewell, I expect O'H[ara] here—see him coming with a confidence which, if he wants, you will inspire, to tell me all. My arms will be open to receive him, and my heart not less open, tho' his prejudices against me really grieve me to the soul, and cast a melancholy cloud over *distant* prospects (I speak not of the present) that would otherwise have much of sunshine, as they present themselves now to my view."

Mary Berry, who, it must be remembered was at this time thirty-two years of age, was old enough to conduct her love-affair in a sensible manner. She was under some obligation to Walpole, who had indubitably been most kind to her, her sister, and her father; but certainly had not placed her under such obligations as to render it necessary from gratitude to wreck her life and abandon such happiness as (it appeared to her) was within her grasp. O'Hara was on the eve of being recalled to Gibraltar, but still, in spite of the urgings of Mrs. Damer and her own heart, she could not bring herself to take the final step of announcing her engagement to Walpole.

THE HON. MRS. DAMER TO MARY BERRY

"[Grosvenor Square], London, October 9th, 1985.

"O'H[ara] has this moment almost left me. I have only taken just time to recover a little after one of *his* interesting and tender interviews, and am set down to give you an account of our conversation. At first he said little, and seemed rather to avoid the subject that evidently occupied his mind, but between us there was too much sympathy for that disposition to last. He then, *mutatis mutandis*, said what he had said to you, what you had told me, and often in the same words. He has, or I am much mistaken, determined upon a character to which he will act up, thro' life, little consonant with his own feelings and sentiments, and to this he is now sacrificing all his own future comfort and happiness, and is avoiding, if not the *only* Being, certainly the Being most calculated to constitute both, for I am persuaded that he has a heart capable of knowing and valuing *you*. He talked much indeed of this *ridicule*, but it sometimes seemed to me that it was not merely that, but a combination of ideas which tended, it is true, all the same way, that led him on *whither* he did not seem clearly to know himself. Many things he said were full of contradictions but to the end, and where I ought to have begun, he said that he *thinks* he will not see you, is, I conclude, afraid to trust himself.

"His orders, he tells me, for going, are hastened, and that he sets out on Tuesday next, I suppose in the evening, for he has faithfully promised to see me in the morning on that day. To-morrow he goes, I understand, to the Prince, and is not to be in town till Monday night. My Mother, he says, he must give up going to. I wished to know if he would go

to you, but he could not tell me, for poor soul! I plainly saw he knew not himself. He said in the course of our conversation many and many so kind things that the reflection at this moment has filled my eyes full of tears I can scarcely see what I am writing. Strange it might sound to others, but I should have pressed him with still great tenderness to my bosom, had he been taking from me at this moment all that is most dear to me in life. Yet as it is, God knows, I felt and I believe, expressed enough.

"They interrupted me with my dinner, which I could not touch, and now I hear a bellman, and will not write much for fear I should be too late, for I know you will be anxious to hear from me. I totally forgot your locket and your picture, but *depend* on it I will get the locket by Tuesday. Forgive me I know you will. Indeed, my head is quite confused. I am torn from a state of painful anxiety and agitation to a state, at this moment, scarcely less painful. Were anyone to see me at this moment, that had seen me in your new rooms this morning, they would not think it the same being. You will, I need not *ask you*, come if you can and when you can to me. God bless and preserve you. Tell me something of yourself, for if *I* feel as I do and all I do must I not dread the agitation your mind has been put into—and to no purpose! What a world! and whither is one to turn! Once more, Heaven bless you."

THE HON. MRS. DAMER TO MARY BERRY

"Grosvenor Square, [London] October 19th, 1795.

"Did I give you an idea of what struck me in O'H[ara]'s manner, particularly that he seemed to

wish to avoid being persuaded, I should say *convinced*, by me? That is, afraid of entering into arguments neither his reason or sound judgement, and still less his heart, could answer, yet feeling his prejudices, fancies, or be they what they may, for I am not equal to classing them, knowing not clearly their species, were dragging him the other way, and opposing a force he did not mean to resist. I think it was so, and this want of disposition in him to hear me might make me say less than I should have said had it been otherwise; yet when I ask myself I feel certain that I said all I could have said, and what I should have said, had I myself been to go with you, if you went, to Gibraltar; and I declare that what ever the relief I may feel from the terrible sensation of losing you thus suddenly, with all the ideas of absence, distance, and real danger attending a sea voyage at this moment, a sensation of melancholy is strongly impressed on my mind from a regret at seeing what appeared to me a chance of future good and happiness to you that it seemed to me must attend so reasonable a union, in short to my poor capacity a marriage founded on reason alone, if ever was such a one—all this to pass by you as it were, I know not why! Yet mistake me not; clear, indeed, I am that, tho' certainly in your power to do so, it would be in *you* unwise to make use of the influence of passion and captivation over him, because it is more than probable that since these absurd scruples can exist in a breast to which I still maintain it, they are not natural, they might return and cause the misery of both, for your true and noble spirit would start even from a husband who could think seriously that for any reason he had done a foolish thing in marrying you.

"I have been writing rather in a hurry, thinking that your Father might call early. He is, however, not yet come, and I continue to fill my paper. I have been telling you of *myself* in talking of *you*, therefore have little to say but that I slept really well and am not *ill*, tho' low and languid in spirit. I saw not a creature yesterday but O'Hara, having determined to be *perdue* at least that one day. I shall go to Mrs. Cholmondeley to-day, and enquire after those I must enquire after, for I have little *disposition*, as you will guess, to see many, but *going* or *being* out of town is what I find most people seem to have forgotten; there they are ready for one at all times. I long to know something of you, and still feel uncertain and anxious, for it seems to me that O'Hara cannot go thus, that he will see you again and, with the waverings of his mind, which are evident, he may wish to resume hopes, which, if he can feel their value, it is past me to think he can voluntarily abandon. God in Heaven preserve and bless you!"

THE HON. MRS. DAMER TO MARY BERRY

"Grosvenor Square, [London], October 15th, 1795.

"O'H[ara] obeyed you and the great coat was laid aside. He spoke to me of you as if himself with openness and confidence. All that he said was expressive of passion, softened by the tenderest care and concern for you, which the cool voice of reason and good sense made but the more touching to me. I think by all he said, and by his whole conduct, that I can plainly perceive he yet scarcely will allow himself to trust entirely to what his *heart* tells him he need not

doubt, and to what, if he knew your character as I do, his *reason* would tell him he *could* not doubt, but unaccustomed as he must be to sentiment, tenderness and affection so expressed, so blended with truth, candour and sincerity, I cannot wonder if all should seem to him still like a flattering dream he dares not trust.

"I cannot express how much the recollection of what he said to me speaking of us both (I mean when you were here) affects me. He surprised and touched me, for I expected nothing of the sort, and your manner of receiving what he said! my dearest, only friend! *surprise* me it could not, but you know how my heart feels every expression of kindness. I can only say that every day convinces me more of what I have ever thought that a heart softened by tenderness and affection renders the mind but the more capable of every exertion. The few words I had to say to you were from Agnes, who begged that I would tell you she hoped if at times you saw her low, you would excuse and forgive her, that she was pleased for your sake at what she really thought tended to your happiness, but that she must feel her loss, and that, she said, she confessed selfishly. These were nearly her words, poor thing. I could not say to her in answer (tho' Heaven knows if I can pity her!) what I conjure to bear in mind, that is, that with no separation in view, she was neither satisfied nor happy, merely from being with you, and that all grievances occasioned by want of sympathy increase by long habit, just as blessings increase where that sympathy exists."

It is difficult at this time of day to assume what was Mary Berry's actual feelings. It would seem as if she enjoyed the romance, but was not prepared

to take any chance to secure the man, for whom, it must be supposed, she had no great affection. What Mrs. Damer could not achieve for her friend, the lover himself could not.

General Charles O'Hara to Mary Berry

[October 20th] 1795.

"The arrangements for the protection of the Mediterranean ships are made and they are under orders to sail immediately. Come to town this evening, that I may see and press you to my breast as often as possible before I leave you. Some excuse for this sudden resolution of coming to London must be made; suppose you say Mrs. Damer wishes to see you before she goes to Goodwood. (*She went this morning*). Her house is ready, but I think you would be better, from being less observed, at home.

"I will be with you between 8 and 9 this evening. Write me word by my servant at what hour you will be in Audley Street. God bless you."

Mary Berry to General O'Hara

"Twickenham, October 20th, 1795.

"After three or four hours of broken slumber, continually agitated with a false idea of seeing you the next day, I wake to the melancholy certainty of a long uncertain and painful absence. My dear friend, I find my mind much less strong than I believed it; and yet, in submitting to this absence, I *think* I am doing right. I am *sure* I am consulting

the peace and happiness of those about me, and not my own. I think you will hereafter love me the better for knowing me capable of a sacrifice which you cannot now doubt how much I feel, and my future happiness (if any is in store for me) will be unsullied by the idea of having anticipated it at the expense of the feelings of others. But in the meantime you are gone and I am here, and my mind is not yet in a state to derive much comfort from cool reasoning. I feel now as if there fifty things I should have liked to have said to you which my extreme and painful oppression prevented last night and would, I am convinced, still prevent, were you at this instant at my side. One idea, however, has so often recurred to me that I will mention it. As in every *possible* future event and circumstance I shall always be proud of your affection and sentiments for me, I beseech you in case of illness, or any danger, to send me, if possible, some token or assurance that you thought of me to the last as you do at this moment. If this is silly, forgive me. My mind will, I hope, soon recover its tone and then you shall have more comfortable letters from me, but writing this has been a relief to me, and therefore must be some comfort to you. Let me hear from Portsmouth, as soon as you can, I beseech you."

It is really not surprising that O'Hara was hurt.

General Charles O'Hara to Mary Berry

"Portsmouth, October 27th, 1795.

"I am fully sensible, my Dearest Mary, that your letter ought, if I was a reasonable Being, to afford me much relief and comfort; but every moment of my

HORACE WALPOLE.
After Eccardt.

existence proves too forcibly for my peace, that comfort will be a stranger to my breast when absent from you, for I cannot, like you, from the imperfection of my nature, derive fortitude sufficient to sacrifice my own to the happiness of others. The delicacy of a mind and sensibility of heart like yours are alone equal to such a task, and tho' I assure you with much truth, I believe you are right, it will be in vain for me to profit by an example. You have awakened my fears, and in some degree my curiosity, where you say, *'that you felt there were fifty things, about you know not what, that you should have liked to have said to me, which your painful oppression the night we parted prevented and would, you are convinced, still prevent was I at your side.'* As I always, and ever, shall act without reserve, in every possible circumstance of my life that may affect you and under the full persuasion that your confidence is as unbounded as mine—open your heart to me, be the consequences ever so injurious to my happiness, for you must know me but little, if you suppose me capable of putting your peace of mind in competition with my own. Your flattering solicitude (Mary, your tenderness undoes me ; how very strange that what should sooth and comfort can at the same time excite such excessive anguish) *'that I should give you, in the event of illness or danger, some token that my sentiments respecting you continued the same as at present'* makes too deep an impression for any language to express, would my heart was in your breast, for that alone could make you sensible of the tender and affectionate regard of my dearest Mary's faithful friend.

"CHA. O'HARA.

"I must give up, I fear, even the hopes of seeing

you before I go, for Admiral Waldegrave showed me a letter this afternoon from Admiral Cornwallis intimating that, tho' the wind was contrary, if the weather should moderate, he should endeavour to sail.

"Farewell, farewell.

"The jumbling and cold I got travelling all night with a constant headache and pain in my breast, that never quits me, weighs very heavy on my old frame.

"Tell my Dear Mrs. Damer I will write to her to-morrow; my head aches so much I cannot hold my pen any longer."

O'Hara, however, made a last effort to induce Mary Berry to behave in a rational way.

GENERAL CHARLES O'HARA TO MARY BERRY

"Portsmouth, October 31st, 1795.

"Here I am, my dear, dear Soul, and here am determined to remain, for I cannot venture to see you again. This self-denial, you are fully convinced, must cost me much, but our meeting to part again afflicts and strikes too deep to be often repeated. Let the pleasing reflection that when we meet again it will be for life, comfort and support us thro' the anxious tedious hours of our separation.

"I believe to have recommended your consulting our friend wither you should, or not, mention to Lord Orford our proposed engagement. Upon reconsidering that matter, I would by no means have you think of it, you owe to his affection, his friendship and the very flattering distinction he has long, constantly and most pointedly shown you, every degree

of attention and even gratitude, and consequently to keep from him, as long as it is possible, the knowledge of an event that, separating you, will overwhelm him with sorrow, and disappointment and defeat all his views and only substantial comfort he enjoys and probably wishes to live for. (My dear Mary, thou art a most extraordinary creature.) In my opinion, the proper time to break it to him will be when you are at the eve of quitting your Father's house for mine, and that communication must be made by yourself. It will be childish in you, and not treating him with the deference and confidence I trust he deserves, to employ anybody else. *Il s'entend* upon this occasion, as upon all others of emergency the Dear Stick must and, I am sure, will give her friendly assistance, for, without her support, I am sure you would not be able to walk in or out of the Peer's room. I think I see you pale and trembling, the dear delicate frame shook to pieces, hesitating what to do; and when I put myself in your place, I feel most forcibly that upon this occasion your emotion must be great, and that reflection, when I consider the cause that agitates you, makes me see my Dearest Mary in a point of view of all others the most interesting to my heart.

"Lord Orford will, for his own sake, as well as yours, receive your information kindly. You must, however, be prepared possibly for some sudden, peevish animadversions upon your marriage, some dictated by friendship, and others by resentment. Be that as it may, he has a claim upon your patient hearing, and possibly you may profit from the many truths he will lay before you, drawn from his long experience of the world. He will endeavour to prove what with him admits of no doubt, the exces-

sive folly of burning incense at any other shrines but those of *Wealth* and *Birth*. Poor me, I feel humbled to the dust when I think of either : and when he has talked himself out of arguments, which *à coup sûr*, will not be till out of breath, preserve a respectful silence, for you will plead in vain to a judge who, being so differently composed as yourself, it is perfectly impossible you should understand each other. The Noble Earl takes glitter, show and precedency—all very good things in their way as appendages, but not commanding features—for his guide. Thy sober, chaste mind builds its happiness (God forbid it should prove delusive) upon being the comfort, the support, the warm disinterested friend of a Man who has nothing to give but reciprocal feelings. With all the respect and deference I really have for Lord Orford, and making every reasonable allowance for the claim he has upon your gratitude, if he is really your friend, unwarped by selfish considerations, he ought to rejoice at an event you contemplate with pleasure, and he ought, from his knowledge of you [to] think you perfectly competent to judge for yourself what are the qualities you wish the Man to possess to whom you give your Person and dedicate your time of life.

"Having now, my dear Mary, disposed of your *Peur, tant bien que mal*, that I know weighs heavy on you, my next care (for I consider myself already wedded to you, and bound to share all your troubles and anxieties, which I do *du fond de mon cœur*), is to soothe your throbbing breast with respect to your Father, Sister, and other self (*et n'en déplaise*, my other self) the dear, dear Stick—they must know, as they do not understand either of us, that when you are mine, you will be as much theirs as ever you

was, and as they are all independent Beings, they may be with us as much as they please."

So, "Old Cock of the Rock", as O'Hara was affectionately called by the soldiers of the garrison at Gibraltar, sailed to take up his new position as Governor, which he held with distinction until his death on February 21st, 1802.

Even after O'Hara's departure, Mary Berry settled down to await his return to her. This, apparently, she took for granted. Early in 1796, she wrote him a long letter, setting forth, rather in the manner of an account, what their establishment would cost. The document is so interesting—considered in the light of a love-letter—that no apology is necessary for printing it.

Mary Berry to General Charles O'Hara

"Setting to work with a pen, ink and paper and and Arithmetic upon a plane of life you at first proposed, my dear friend, I find, as indeed I told you at the time, that it would cost much more than you had any idea of, and much more even than the funds of which you then supposed yourself possessed. But upon a smaller scale (on the accuracy of which from my experience in my father's house I think you may depend) I have made out a plan which, I am persuaded, includes every comfort necessary to a small establishment in London upon the only footing that you and I should like any establishment—that of order and regular expense, not of pinching economy and pitiful savings of which I am as incapable as yourself, *c'est tout dire*. You who are perfectly unacquainted with the details of an Establishment in

this town, will, I dare say, be astonished at the expense of every article. I have taken them up at their present high price, and made such a liberal allowance upon most of them that I think we should never exceed and might sometimes be within the mark; but upon a less sum, that is to say, at less than the rate of this sum per annum, I don't think you could possibly live comfortably to yourself in London. I mean seeing agreeably all those friends who should prefer a neat plain dinner or supper, and our *agreeable society* to a cut off all *your* extravagancies, your Saddle-Horses, your separate carriage, and one of your Men-Servants; and yet I have not reduced my calculation within the limits you prescribed, but I have to observe that our expences whether we were in the Kingdom of Gibraltar, visiting the Pyramids, or any other travelling schemes whatsoever would everywhere be considerably less than established in London—and that whenever you find such establishment inconvenient or imprudent, I shall be the person most eager to break it up and most willing to accompany you to any other part of the Globe. I must tell you, too, that upon my father's talking to me upon the subject of affairs, which he has done since we parted, I find him quite unwilling that I should be a burthen to you and determined that every thing I can have from him shall belong to you as soon as I do myself. Enough upon this subject of money, on which I know we both think much alike. I am aware of all its advantages, take all it procures, and know how little it can be done without, but *the more* or the *less* never made happiness, and when weighed against the real satisfactions of the heart is not (even to the sober eye of reason) a feather in the scale.

[*Enclosure.*]

	£	s.	d.
One pair of Job Horses, inclusive of coachman's Wages for 8 months of the year	125	0	0
Annual repairs to Carriage, about ..	25	0	0
Two Men servants at £20 apiece	40	0	0
An Upper Man at the wages of	55	0	0
Wages of 4 Women Servants, a Housekeeper, Cook under her, a Housemaid, and Lady's Maid	58	0	0
Liveries for the 3 Men servants and the Coachman	80	0	0
House Rent and Taxes	200	0	0
Coals	50	0	0
Candles	25	0	0
Beer	25	0	0
Wine	100	0	0
Housekeeping, at the rate of £10 a week, or £40 a month	480	0	0
	£1,263	0	0
To You	800	0	0
To Me	200	0	0
	£2,263	0	0

The effect of this letter on the volatile soldier must beggar description, though no doubt it was some comfort to him to learn that he would receive £800 a year pocket-money, out of a total expectation of something over £2,000. This was, out of all proportion, lavish. Only he was profoundly uninterested in the document. To a man of his ways, it must have been an awful shock that his fiancée was concentrating on the detail that £25 (about) was to be ear marked for "annual repairs to carriage". O'Hara had, it would seem, a substantial grievance that he

was held at arm's length, lest Horace Walpole should be distressed by the news of the engagement. As an accepted lover, it is not difficult to accept his contention that he should have occupied the first place in the mind as well as the affections, of his fiancée. He was not a patient man : also he was of an amorous disposition. Mary Berry holding him aloof, he, at Gibraltar, formed connections with two women, by each of whom he had a family.

General Charles O'Hara to the Hon. Mrs. Damer

"Gibraltar, April 26th, 1796.

"When you have seen my letter to your friend, you will understand for what reason I complain of the very extraordinary treatment I have received from you both, and how very sensibly I am affected by it—particularly from you, who I love with the warmest, most cordial affection—not only for your own uncommon excellencies, but because you are the daughter of the two people upon earth to whom I feel the most obliged for the affectionate countenance and protection upon which my good fortune and pride has been built.—Farewell."

Mary Berry to General Charles O'Hara

"April 27th, 1796.

"All my doubts are at an end. You have at last thought fit to speak a language which no prepossession can mistake, nor no indulgence palliate. I have now received your letters of the 26th February

and 30th March, and Mrs. D[amer] your letter of the 7th March. Make yourself perfectly easy. Your having *'consented to become my Husband'* as you are pleased to express yourself to Mrs. D[amer] will entail none of the evils you so much dread.

"My last letter of the 4th April will have shown you my unwillingness to believe, and my determination not to admit, the only interpretation your long silences and the very improper style of your letters could bear, till sanctioned by yourself. That sanction you have at last fully and completely given in two letters whose *least* faults are their being a farrago of *inconsistencies* and *contradictions*, both with regard to *me* and *yourself*. They are expressed in terms which I believe were never before used to any *Gentlewoman*, not to say to any woman of common sense and common spirit. They have, however, *completely* done their business, yet so persuaded have you chosen to be (from what part of my character I am perfectly at a loss to guess) that whatever your conduct, *I am determined to marry you*, that I fancy you will hardly believe your own eyes or my assertions. You desire *me* to be explicit and to be serious (as if *I* had ever been otherwise), but I shall now be explicit in your *own words*, which as they are generally very extraordinary ones, may perhaps (to yourself) be clearer than any others. I do then *'indeed suppose, and verily believe that you have recourse to a thousand falsehoods and imaginary apprehensions merely as a cover to disguise the real cause, your having altered your mind and not meaning to marry.'* Your letter to Mrs. D. confirms this to me, nay, owns the change in your sentiments in express terms. And, on the other hand, even supposing your intentions with regard to marriage were not really altered, then your conduct

towards me for these last six months has been such as *'justly to have forfeited my good opinion with all its inevitable consequences—my affection and esteem.'*

"My frank, open, honourable nature would have preferred and given you credit for a more immediate, a more decided and a more *Gentlemanlike* avowal of a change in your sentiments, it would have spared me many months of cruel anxiety, and when I had ceased to consider you as a Lover, your character would to me have remained inviolate as a friend.—You have chosen it otherwise ; so fare you well, and if ever you feel the want or require the comfort of a sincere, intelligent, affectionate friend, remember the *pains* you took to eradicate sentiments which you will then no longer mistrust and of which no power on earth but yourself could have robbed you. Farewell."

"April 29th.

"Since writing the above, I have seen your friend Mr. Barnes, who delivered me your letter of the 20th March, and I have since received your letters of the 27th. They are all of a piece with the unwarrantable and unprovoked language of the other two ; but a hundred such letters would *now* have no effect upon me, than confirming my indifference to their opinions of myself and my pity for their wrong-headed writer, who, under the mask of exaggerated ideas of honour and justice, is perhaps not aware he is guilty of a flagrant breach of both. In your letter of the 27th March you talk to *me* of keeping *you* in doubt and uncertainty—to *me* who, till the receipt of your last letters, had no more doubt of becoming your wife than she has now of having nothing more to do with the man who can bargain for tyranny beforehand, and would accept of that Being for his

Wife who he found would patiently submit to ill-treatment.

"Mr. Barnes will give you his own opinion of your conduct. His distress at it was visible on his countenance. It is earnest request that I have not sent this letter by to-day's post, and indeed I should be sorry that you supposed it the hasty effusions of anger, instead of the calm resolutions of a suffering injured and determined mind. Farewell.

"P.S.—I should not have taken notice of your writing a letter to Mr. Barnes by the *hand of a Secretary*, in which my name at full length, and the proposed connexion is talked of, if you had not thought fit to accuse *me* of mentioning what time has proved the propriety of concealing. On *my* side I am certain it has not been betrayed ; you best know if, after the fact I have mentioned, you can say as much on yours."

MARY BERRY TO GENERAL CHARLES O'HARA

"Twickenham, July 16th, 1796.

"Alas, my dear friend, how have you trifled and *doubted* away both your own happiness and mine ! I have this moment received your letter of the 20th June.

"The high opinion, the confidence and the affection which you know I have so long had for you when considering you merely in the light of a friend, still assures me that what you say in your letter is strictly true or at least what you believe to be so. And as far as I am able to comprehend your real meaning and wishes from your letter, it is this : That your *intentions* with regard to me have never altered,

but (to use your own words) *'when separation gave you time to reflect and see what would be probably the result of our marriage considered on the serious side'*, such doubts and fears of our mutual happiness arose in your mind as you thought necessary to communicate to me. Remember it is not of *this* I complain: on the contrary, you know my principal reason for objecting to our marriage before you left England was that it might be sanctioned by reflexion, but the moment that reflexion made it appear to you in a different light, the moment such doubts and fears took possession of your mind, that moment you should have decidedly and openly owned *your* altered feelings, instead of starting injurious doubts which your always making to originate in my sentiments instead of your own, together with the frequent levity of your style, have alone thus long deceived me both as to your conduct and your real wishes. *My* constitution and character does not like yours *'urge and press me on with Giant steps upon every occasion.'* On the contrary, obliged from my earliest youth not only to think for myself, but to think for those who ought to have thought for me, I have learnt to make Giant steps in nothing but thoughtfulness and precaution. I had given the subject of our union my most serious consideration in every point of view in which *I* could place it, before I agreed to it, and before we parted. No separation would then have made any difference in my opinion till I was convinced it had altered yours, but the instant this was the case to have concealed it from me would have been treachery to my all-confiding affection and sacrificing every real principle of honour to a Phantom that would have made us both miserable. All I have to complain of is that you did not sooner explain yourself in clearer

and less offensive language, and not continue for months together writing to the Being who, by your own account, you still continued to love, letters whose style, arguments, and general import deceived not only my partial judgement but that of my friend (interested in nothing so much as me and yourself), that of my Father, that of my Sister, and that of the sober head of your friend, Mr. Barnes, whose letters to you (which he showed me) must surely have convinced you, if anything could, of the extreme impropriety and cruelty of your letters to a woman you still loved, respected, and intended to become your wife. Can you *possibly* think that so many people, all warmly partial to you, should unite in wilfully misunderstanding and misconstruing your letters, if they had been in any respect such as reason and affection should have dictated to a person in my situation, at such a distance, and who always addressed you with the perfect, unbounded confidence and affection which she always felt for you? Can you, I say, think this POSSIBLE? And yet in your letter of to-day you still continue to talk of *your* having been *'so ungenerously and unhandsomely misconstrued.'*

"What then remains for me, but, while I acquit you of any dishonourable change in your *intentions*, to lament, which, believe me, I do heartily, an obstinate wrongheadedness which in despite even of your own wishes will ever prevent your judging fairly either of my character, or that of my friend, and consequently of treating either as they deserve—to lament that the false and profligate ideas which I know you entertain of women in general, and which I have so often and so seriously combated long before I thought myself at all concerned in your opinion,

should have so pervaded your sentiments and so falsified your view of every individual, as even to prevent your warm and excellent heart indulging in its natural and unbiassed feelings towards those best formed to understand and sympathise with them? Sincerely do I pity a disposition which I know must inflict upon itself *almost* as much pain as it has given me, for your natural good sense will often, for a time, get the better of these vile prejudices, and you will then feel that, while they deprive you of everything that can give rational comfort, they supply nothing in its place but unavailing precautions, useless doubts, and ungenerous sentiments.

"You say you are *'certain it will be in vain you plead against prepossession and prejudice as strongly taken up as mine appears to be.'* You see I have neither *'prepossession'* nor *'prejudice,'* and that you speak seriously, I seriously acquit you of what you neither own nor attempt a justification of—your various and repeated misconceptions and want of confidence in my character? How can I acquit you of eternally construing the frank, unaffected dictates of my affection for you into a determination of marriage of *any sort,* and an eagerness for *this* in particular, which in the very next sentence, perhaps of the same letter, you declared it was utterly impossible for me to like or wish? How can I acquit you of the *mad* wrongheadedness with which you took up the special messenger which my friend sent you by Lisbon, *merely* to accelerate our meeting, which we then thought you desired as much ourselves, and your returning answers not only the most improper and affronting in themselves, but the most perfectly unconnected with the letters to which they ought to have replied? Tell me how I can acquit your

understanding of all this, for your heart, I still believe excellent—and I may still have the comfort of thinking of you as I did six months ago.

"I have still a high value for your friendship and good opinion, both of which I *feel* I deserve, but I will never purchase either by the baseness of saying I regret a conduct guided throughout by the calm dictates of the sincerest and most rational affection for you, tempering the considerations ever due to oneself; a conduct which I am certain, were you an unprejudiced spectator, you yourself would be the first to approve. When you talk of *'the tone of harsh and bitter invective with which you have been treated'* I have only to conclude you weigh your *own* words as little as you do those of others, and to refer to you a reperusal of *all* my letters, and most especially that of 18th May (or March) in which if you do not find *'cool, deliberate kind and reasonable admonitions.'* I shall cease endeavouring to convince myself that the O'Hara with whom I have been corresponding is the same warmhearted, rational, affectionate O'Hara with whom I parted in October. —Farewell."

Thus ended the correspondence, and the acquaintance, between Mary Berry and O'Hara. It is difficult to blame the General—the lady, no longer a girl, was too cold-blooded for such as him. It was probably better for her, anyhow, that the affair ended as it did. Yet, to the last, she cherished his memory. She sealed up his letters—and, how pathetic it is—when she had passed the age of four score she opened the packet, re-read the correspondence, and inserted the following sad note:

"This parcel of letters relate to the six happiest months of my long and insignificant existence,

although these six months were accompanied by fatiguing and unavoidable uncertainty, and by the absence of every thing that could constitute present enjoyment. But I looked forward to a future existence which I felt for the first time would have called out all the powers of my mind and all the warmest feelings of my heart, and should have been supported by one who, but for the cruel absence which separated us, would never have for a moment doubted that we should have materially contributed to each other's happiness. These prospects served even to pass cheerfully a long winter of delays and uncertainty, by keeping my mind firmly riveted on their accomplishment. A concatenation of unfortunate circumstances—the political state of Europe making absence a necessity, and even frequent communication impossible; letters lost and delayed, all certainty of meeting more difficult, questions unanswered, doubts unsatisfied,—all these circumstances combined in the most unlucky manner, crushed the fair fabric of my happiness, not at one fell swoop, but by the slow mining misery of loss of confidence, of unmerited complaints, and finding by degrees misunderstandings, and the firm rock of mutual confidence crumbling under my feet, while my bosom for long could not banish a hope that all might yet be set right. And so it would, had we met for twenty-four hours. But he remained at his government at Gibraltar till his death in 1802. And I, forty-two years afterwards, on opening these papers which had been sealed up ever since, receive the conviction that some feelings in some minds are indelible."

Yet, it may be surmised, she never had any doubt of the correctness of her conduct in this matter—and very correct, no doubt, indeed, too correct, it

was. Poor lady. And it is all the more pathetic because the end of Horace Walpole's days was nigh.

Walpole was now ailing. "Lord Orford," Mrs. Damer wrote to the Countess of Upper Ossory on November 6th, 1796, "was struck last Thursday night by the intense cold, which first flung him into a violent vomiting, and then gave him great pain in both legs, which turned into an inflammation the next day in the right leg, and seemed tending to an abscess like that he had in the other leg last year. In this state he was brought to town on Friday last, with scarce the sound of a voice, and where he is now lying on a couch in a state of weakness and age, that keeps him from seeing anybody, and makes him incapable of conversing on any subjects, public or private." Walpole never regained his strength. On the following December 5th, Mary Berry, describing her friend's last days, wrote: "the gout, the attacks of which were every day becoming more frequent and longer, made those with whom Lord Orford had been living at Strawberry Hill very anxious that he should return to Berkeley Square, to be nearer assistance in case of any sudden seizure." As his correspondents, soon after his removal, were likewise established in London, no more letters passed between them. When not immediately suffering from pain, his mind was tranquil and cheerful. He was still capable of being amused, and of taking some part in conversation; but during the last weeks of his life, when fever was superadded to his other ills, his mind became subject to the cruel hallucination of supposing himself neglected and abandoned by the only persons to whom his memory clung, and whom he always desired to see. In vain they recalled to his recollection how recently they

had left him, and how short had been their absence; it satisfied him for the moment, but the same idea recurred as soon as he had lost sight of them. At last nature, sinking under the exhaustion of weakness, obliterated all ideas but those of mere existence, which ended without a struggle, on March 2nd, 1797.

THE END

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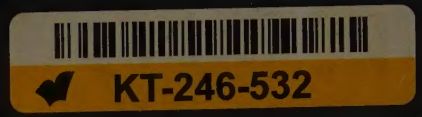
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